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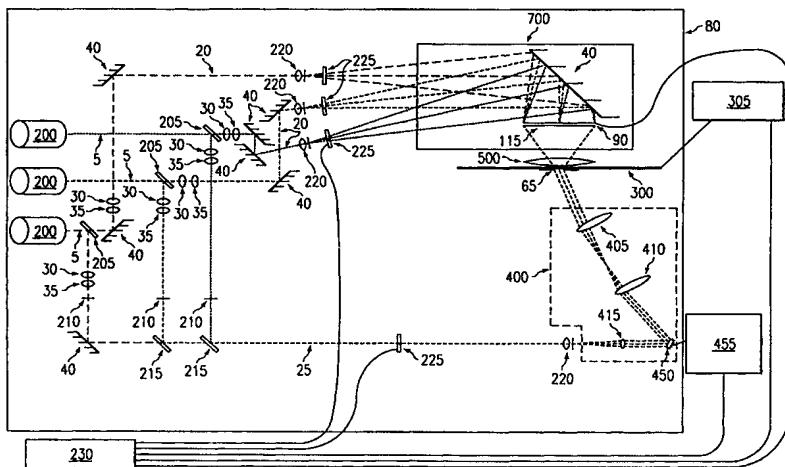
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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR RECORDING ONE-STEP, FULL-COLOR, FULL-PARALLAX, HOLOGRAPHIC STEREOSCOPES



(57) Abstract

The present invention concerns methods and devices for creating and printing variable size and variable resolution holographic stereograms and holographic optical elements using computer rendered images of three-dimensional computer models or using computer processed images. The present invention is an apparatus and method for printing one-step, full-color, full-parallax holographic stereograms utilizing a reference beam-steering system (400) that allows a reference beam (25) to expose a holographic recording material (70) from different angles. The present invention may also utilize a voxel-control lens (500) placed in the path of the object beam (20) and in close proximity to the holographic recording material (70) to control the resolution of a holographic stereogram. The present invention may also utilize interchangeable band-limited diffusers (45) and reference-beam masking plates (65). The present invention incorporates viewing zone techniques to the rendering process for one-step, holographic stereograms to produce animated, one-step holographic stereograms.

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METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR RECORDING ONE-STEP,
FULL-COLOR, FULL-PARALLAX, HOLOGRAPHIC STEREOGRAMS

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to the field of holography. More particularly, it concerns methods and devices for creating and printing variable size and 5 variable resolution holographic stereograms and holographic optical elements using computer rendered images of three-dimensional computer models or using computer processed images.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 A holographic stereogram is a type of hologram synthesized or composed from a set of two-dimensional views of a subject. A holographic stereogram is capable of creating the convincing illusion of a solid three-dimensional subject from closely spaced, discrete-15 perspective, two-dimensional component views. In addition, if the two-dimensional component views are properly generated, a holographic stereogram can also create the illusion of an animated image. Although holographic stereograms can project such special effects, due to 20 limitations in the methods and techniques for printing holographic stereograms, holographic stereograms have generally been expensive, difficult, and time consuming to produce.

25 Techniques have been developed for reducing the number of steps involved in producing holographic stereograms to one optical printing step. One-step technology usually involves using computer processed images of objects or

computer models of objects to build a hologram from a number of contiguous, small, elemental pieces, known as elemental holograms or hogels. This one-step technology eliminates the need to create a preliminary hologram.

5 To produce a full-parallax, holographic stereogram using traditional one-step technology, a three-dimensional computer model of an object or a scene is created. There are numerous computer graphic modeling programs, rendering programs, animation programs, three dimensional 10 digitalization systems, or combinations of the programs or systems that can be used to generate and manipulate a three-dimensional computer model of an object or a scene. Examples of such programs or systems include, but are not limited to, computer-aided-design (CAD) programs, 15 scientific visualization programs, and virtual reality programs.

In addition, to produce a holographic stereogram using one-step technology requires that the position of the 20 hologram surface and individual elemental holograms relative to an object or a scene be determined. Furthermore, a proper computer graphic camera(s)'s description for an elemental hologram and the size and 25 location of a spatial light modulator (SLM), a device that can display a two-dimensional image, need to be determined.

Once all the aforementioned initial parameters are 30 determined, a two-dimensional projection on the SLM for each elemental hologram is computed based on the computer graphic model of the object or scene that was created, the positions of the elemental holograms, and the computer graphic camera's description for the elemental holograms. The two-dimensional projection on the SLM for each elemental hologram may be rendered using various computer graphic techniques. The process of creating two-dimensional views from a three-dimensional object and

adding qualities such as variations in color and shade to a computer graphic model is often referred to as rendering. There are numerous methods for rendering. One method is ray-tracing, which computes images by accurately simulating 5 sampled light rays in a computer model. Another method is scan-line conversion, which computes images one raster or line at a time. Typically scan-line rendering does not produce as realistic results as ray tracing. However, scan-line rendering is frequently used in animation 10 packages because it is faster. Another method for using computer graphics to render images for one-step, full-parallax holographic stereograms is described in an article by Halle and Kropp. Halle, M. and Kropp, A., "Fast Computer Graphics Rendering for Full Parallax Spatial 15 Displays," *Proc. Soc. Photo-Opt. Instrum. Eng. (SPIE)*, 3011:105-112 (February 10-11, 1997), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

When holographic stereograms are produced by either the multi-step or one-step techniques, the reconstructed 20 images may have geometric image distortions. These geometric image distortions may be very apparent, especially in large, billboard size holographic displays or holographic displays in other geometries, such as an alcove or a partial cylinder.

25 One solution that has been incorporated into multi-step techniques to correct for geometric image distortions for multiplex holograms is discussed in an article by Okada. Okada, K., et. al., "A Method of Distortion Compensation of Multiplex Holograms," *Optics* 30 *Communications*, vol. 48, no. 3, pp. 167-170 (December 1, 1983), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. The technique discussed in Okada's article to correct distortion is a method to correct geometrical and time distortion of a single or monocular viewpoint of a

finished hologram. Because it is a post-processing method that takes place after image acquisition, Okada's technique would be inefficient if adopted to generate animated computer graphics one-step, holographic stereograms. 5 Moreover, Okada's method only produces horizontal-parallax-only transmission type holograms.

Others have developed techniques for pre-distorting one-step, holographic stereograms to reduce distortion in the final holographic display. One such pre-distortion 10 technique is described in a paper by Halle and others. Halle, M. et al, "The Ultragram: A Generalized Holographic Stereogram," *Proc. Soc. Photo-Opt. Instrum. Eng. (SPIE)*, vol. 1461 Practical Holography V, p. 142 (February 1991), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by 15 reference. Although widely used, typical pre-distortion techniques for one-step methods for producing full-parallax, holographic stereograms are significantly limited by available computer processing speeds and the resolution of images produced by traditional one-step methods. In 20 addition, techniques for pre-distorting one-step, full parallax, holographic stereograms have not been able to produce comprehensible, animated, one step, full parallax, holographic stereograms.

Apparatus for printing one-step, monochromatic, 25 holographic-stereograms have been developed. Typically, such prior art printers, as depicted in FIGURE 1 include: a monochrome coherent light source 1, lenses 42, mirrors 40, an optical system 89, a shutter 10, a mechanism for translating film 69, holographic recording material 70, 30 usually in the form of film, a personal computer 85 to control the timing for the exposure sequence, and a separate high-speed computer 87 for image calculations. The prior art printer depicted in FIGURE 1, was discussed in two articles by Yamaguchi. Yamaguchi, M., et al.,

"Development of a Prototype Full-Parallax Holoprinter," *Proc. Soc. Photo-Opt Instrum. Eng. (SPIE)* vol. 2406, Practical Holography IX. pp. 50-56 (February 1995); and Yamaguchi, M., et al., "High-Quality Recording of a Full-
5 Parallax Holographic Stereogram with a Digital Diffuser," *Optical Letters*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 135-137 (January 20, 1994), the disclosures of each are incorporated herein by reference. The prior art printer depicted in FIGURE 1 is capable of producing monochromatic holographic stereograms,
10 but not full-color holographic stereograms.

A typical prior art hologram printer, like the one depicted in FIGURE 1, usually is supported by a vibration isolation table 80. In addition the prior art printer depicted by FIGURE 1 uses a HeNe laser for a light source
15 1 that produces a coherent light beam 5 that may be collimated. A shutter 10 is placed at the output of light source 1. A beam-splitter 15 splits the light 5 from the light source 1 into an object beam 20 and a reference beam 25. The polarization of the object and reference beams 20,
20 25 are adjusted by a pair of half-wave plates 30 and a pair of polarizers 35. The half-wave plates 30 and polarizers 35 also control the ratio of the beams. The prior art printer also uses a number of mirrors 40. In addition, the prior art printer uses a system of enlarging lenses 42 to
25 distribute the object beam 20 from the light source 1 into the optical system 89 depicted in FIGURE 1.

The optical system 89 of the prior art printer of FIGURE 1 includes a band-limited diffuser 45, a liquid crystal display panel (LCD panel) 50, and a converging lens 55. A band-limited diffuse is a diffuser with a deterministic phase pattern designed to diffuse light in a specific pattern or direction. The band-limited diffuser 45 depicted in FIGURE 1 is specifically designed for the monochromatic light source being used -- a HeNe laser. The
30

LCD panel 50 used in the prior art printer of FIGURE 1 is a gray scale, electrically addressed panel with twisted-nematic liquid crystals. The LCD panel 50 receives image data calculated by a high-speed computer 87 by an analog video signal. The converging lens 55 shown in FIGURE 1 focuses the images from the LCD panel 50 to the holographic recording material 70. The converging lens 55 generally has a low f-number in order to produce a wide angle of view. Due to the need to correct for spherical aberrations along the optical axis, Yamaguchi utilized a converging lens 55 composed of three lenses to reduce spherical aberration and realize a f-number of around 0.8.

To prevent the exposure of parts of the holographic recording material 70 that are not part of the elemental hologram 110 meant to be exposed, the prior art printer of FIGURE 1, uses, in close proximity to the holographic recording material 70, an object beam masking plate 60 with an aperture the size of the elemental hologram 110 to prevent the object beam 20 from exposing other parts of the holographic recording material 70.

The band-limited diffuser 45 shown in FIGURE 1 improves the uniformity of the distribution of the object beam 20 over an elemental hologram on the holographic recording material 70. If the band-limited diffuser 45 is designed such that an object beam 20 is focused only over the area of an elemental hologram, then an object beam masking plate 60 is not needed to prevent exposure of areas outside the elemental hologram. However, if used with such a band-limited diffuser, the object beam masking plate 60 may have an aperture larger than the size of the elemental hologram 110. An object beam 20 and a band-limited diffuser 45 that allow even illumination of an elemental hologram 110 by an object beam 20 need to be matched by a reference beam masking plate 65 with an aperture the size

of the elemental hologram 110. Because the required matching of a object beam 20, a band-limited diffuse 45, and reference beam masking plate 65 to the size of a desired elemental hologram, it has been difficult to change 5 the sizes of elemental holograms exposed by a hologram printer. Because of this lack of flexibility, prior art printers cannot easily print holograms having different sizes of elemental holograms, and are restricted to printing holograms with single, fixed-sized elemental 10 holograms.

FIGUREs 2-4 illustrate alternative prior art embodiments of optical systems that function in the same way as the optical system 89 depicted in FIGURE 1.

In FIGUREs 2-4, an object beam 20 is directed through 15 a SLM 90 that has a sample image point 100 on its surface. The object beam 20 may be normal to the SLM surface or off-axis from the normal. SLM 90 may also have an array of pixels 95. LCD panels, cinematography film, and transparencies have been used as SLMs 90.

20 In FIGURE 2, the object beam is directed through a simple diffuser 105, such as a section of ground glass, that scatters light. When a simple diffuser 105 is used, then an object beam masking plate 60 must be used to prevent exposing areas of the holographic recording 25 material 70 outside the elemental hologram 110 that are not meant to be exposed.

In FIGURE 3, an object beam 20 is directed through a 30 holographic optical element (HOE) 115. A HOE is a hologram that is specially designed to redirect light emanating from a source in a certain way. For instance, a HOE may be designed to act as a lens to converge light to a single point. As another example, a HOE may be designed to act as a band-limited diffuser that is paired with a lens to converge light over an area rather than a single point.

The HOE 115 depicted in FIGURE 3 is one that is designed to evenly expose an area the size and shape of an elemental hologram 110. When such a HOE is used, an object beam masking plate 60 (shown in FIGURE 2) need not be used at 5 all or, if used, may have an aperture larger than the size of the elemental hologram 110 to be exposed.

In FIGURE 4, an object beam 20 is directed through a band-limited diffuser, which may be a band-limited digital diffuser, 45 and a converging lens 55. The band-limited diffuser 45 depicted in FIGURE 4 is designed to converge 10 the object beam 20 over the area of elemental hologram 110. Thus, an object beam masking plate 60 (shown in FIGURE 2) need not be used at all or, if used may have an aperture larger than the size of the elemental hologram 110 to be 15 exposed.

In FIGURES 2-4, the sample image point 100 is an image point of the SLM 90 that is recorded in an elemental hologram 110 on a holographic recording material 70. Reference beam 25 is directed at the elemental hologram 110 20 such that the interference pattern formed by the interaction of the object beam 20 and the reference beam 25 may be recorded on the elemental hologram 110 on the holographic 110 on the holographic recording material 70.

To expose a two-dimensional array of elemental 25 holograms, the prior art printer of FIGURE 1 uses a mechanism for translating holographic film 69 that includes pulse controlled motors 71. Typically, the holographic recording material 70 in a prior art printer is photographic film. The film is held between the object 30 beam masking plate 60 and the reference beam masking plate 65. Both masking plates 60 and 65 have apertures that are the size of the elemental holograms 110 being exposed. The masking plates 60 and 65 are moved by a solenoid 72. Pulse controlled motors 71 translate the film in two directions.

In the prior art system depicted in FIGURE 1, the timing of the exposure sequence is controlled by a personal computer. Thus, the solenoid 72, as well as the pulse controlled motors 71 and the shutter 10, are controlled by the personal computer 85. In contrast, the images for the exposures are calculated off-line by a high-speed computer 87. The image calculations are transferred by an analog video signal to the LCD panel 50.

For a holographic stereogram to be reconstructed, an illumination source must be placed at an appropriate angle. If the illumination source is not placed correctly, a holographic stereogram will not be reconstructed or will appear with distortions, such as magnification distortions. Despite advances in holographic techniques and equipment, the display illumination geometry of a one-step, holographic stereogram remains a problem. The display illumination geometry, i.e., the placement of an illumination source with respect to a holographic stereogram, depends on the cumulative effect of the angles at which a reference beam exposed each of a holographic stereogram's elemental holograms. For example, if the angle at which all of the elemental holograms on a holographic stereogram are exposed to a collimated reference beam is constant, and if the surface of the holographic stereogram is flat, then the holographic stereogram needs a collimated illumination source to illuminate each of the elemental holograms from the appropriate angle if the hologram is to be properly reconstructed without defects such as magnification distortion.

Furthermore, in practice, it has been common to create reflection holographic stereograms which are meant to be illuminated with a diverging light source such as a point source. However, the prior art has not overcome the

difficulty in designing a printer in which the angle of a reference beam is automatically and flexibly changeable to allow reconstruction by a point source and with minimal distortion.

5 In addition, it remains difficult to control the resolution or elemental hologram density of a holographic image. The sharpness of a holographic image depends on the image resolution and the extent of any blurring. Blurring can be caused by having a large illumination source, such
10 as that of a long fluorescent light, illuminate a hologram. In addition, blurring can be caused by the large spectral spread of an illumination source. If an illumination source that is small and monochromatic, such as a laser source expanded through a microscope objective lens (i.e.
15 a small, inexpensive, achromatic, high-power lens), is used, blurring may be minimized, and the sharpness of the holographic image will mainly depend on the image resolution of the hologram.

20 The image resolution of a three-dimensional image is defined as the volumetric density of individually
25 distinguishable image points in an image volume. For one-step, holographic stereograms, including full-parallax and horizontal-parallax holograms, this resolution is usually not constant throughout an image volume. For small images of little depth, the variation of image resolution with depth is hardly noticeable. However, for holographic stereograms with significant depth, the variation in image resolution with depth can be very apparent.

30 As shown in FIGURE 5, if the light from an illumination source 130 that is the same type of light source as that which generated the reference beam 25 that exposed an elemental hologram 110 illuminates the elemental hologram 110 from the appropriate conjugate angle, the reconstruction 125 of the sample image point 100, (shown in

FIGUREs 2-4), on the reconstruction 120 of the image of the SLM is formed at the same apparent distance and position relative to the elemental hologram 110 as it appeared to the elemental hologram 110 at the time of recording.

5 FIGURE 6 shows lines drawn from the boundaries between neighboring elemental holograms 110 on a holographic recording material 70 through the boundaries between neighboring reconstructed pixels 135 of the reconstructed image 120 of a SLM. The areas bounded between the lines drawn from the boundaries of at least two elemental 10 holograms represent independently addressable volume elements, or voxels 140. A voxel 140 is a component unit which represents an arbitrary three-dimensional object or scene. Assuming that the elemental holograms 110 are 15 larger than the SLM pixels, as shown in FIGURE 6, the sizes of the voxels 140 increase with increasing distance from the surface of a reconstructed image of a SLM 120. If the sizes of the voxels 140 are too coarse relative to the desired detail size of a three-dimensional object or scene, 20 the reproduced image will be poor or indiscernible. If the three-dimensional image of an object or scene extends over a wide range of depth, a variation in the sizes of the voxels will also be very undesirable because such a variation would lead to poor image quality.

25 Thus, hologram printers of the prior art have limitations that make them impractical for commercial purposes. In particular, these prior art printers suffer from: lack of ability to print full-color holographic stereograms; lack of ability to simultaneously expose 30 multiple elemental holograms; lack of flexibility to quickly and easily adjust a hologram printer to print at different elemental hologram sizes; lack of flexibility to easily change the angle of a reference beam to a holographic recording material; lack of ability to control

the resolution of a hologram; and lack of ability to create computer generated images which display animation or different images with a change of viewing position.

5 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention overcomes many of the above-noted limitations and problems of prior art hologram printers and methods used to print holographic stereograms with the following structures and methods.

10 The present invention is an apparatus and method for printing one-step, full-color, full parallax holographic stereograms utilizing a reference beam-steering system that allows a reference beam to expose a holographic recording material from different angles. More particularly, a
15 coherent beam is split into object and reference beams. The object beam passes through an object beam unit in which a rendered image is displayed, while the reference beam passes through the reference beam-steering system. The object and reference beams interfere with each other at an
20 elemental hologram on a holographic recording material. A computer controls the exposure time and the movement of the recording material and may also render the images displayed in the object beam unit. In addition, the computer may also store the images before they are displayed in the
25 object beam unit.

30 In addition, the present invention may also utilize a voxel-control lens placed in the path of the object beam and in close proximity to the holographic recording material to control the resolution of a holographic stereogram.

In addition, the present invention may also utilize interchangeable band-limited diffusers and reference-beam masking plates.

Furthermore, the present invention incorporates viewing zone techniques to the rendering process for one-step, holographic stereograms to produce animated, one-step holographic stereograms.

5 In accordance with long-standing patent law convention, the words "a" and "an" when used in this application, including the claims, denotes "at least one".

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

10 The following drawings form part of the specification and are included to further demonstrate certain aspects of the present invention. The invention may be better understood by reference to one or more of these drawings in combination with the detailed description of specific 15 embodiments presented herein.

FIGUREs 1(a) and (b) are schematic, top-view drawings of a prior art hologram printer.

20 FIGUREs 2(a) and (b) are simplified, top-view illustrations of a one-step, reflection, elemental hologram recording using an optical system including a simple diffuser.

FIGURE 3 is a simplified, top-view illustration of a one-step, reflection, elemental hologram recording using an optical system including a holographic optical element.

25 FIGURE 4 is a simplified, top-view illustration of a one-step, reflection, elemental hologram recording using an optical system including a band-limited diffuser and a converging lens.

30 FIGURE 5 is a simplified, top-view illustration of the reconstruction of an elemental hologram of a holographic stereogram.

FIGURE 6 is a illustration of the changes in sizes of voxels with distance from a reconstructed image of a SLM.

FIGURE 7 is a top-view, schematic drawing of one embodiment of the present invention for a one-step, full-color, full-parallax printer for holographic stereograms.

5 FIGURE 8 is a top-view, schematic drawing of another embodiment of the present invention for a one-step, full-color, full-parallax printer for holographic stereograms.

FIGURE 9 is an illustration of a particular embodiment of the present invention to control the variation in sizes of voxels.

10 FIGURES 10(a) and (b) illustrate how the apparent distance of a SLM, as seen by an elemental hologram, may change when a voxel-control lens is utilized.

FIGURE 11 is an illustration of voxel boundary lines that are approximately parallel to each other.

15 FIGURE 12 is a schematic illustration of an embodiment of the reference beam-steering system of the present invention.

20 FIGURE 13 is a schematic illustration of another embodiment of the reference beam-steering system of the present invention.

FIGURE 14 is a schematic illustration of an embodiment of the reference beam-steering system of the present invention that utilizes a beam-steering aperture.

25 FIGURE 15 is a orthogonal-view illustration of an embodiment of the beam-steering mirror system of the present invention.

FIGURE 16 is a front-view illustration of another embodiment of the beam-steering mirror system of the present invention.

30 FIGURE 17 is a schematic illustration of an embodiment of the reference beam-steering system of the present invention that utilizes fiber optics and a translation system.

FIGURE 18 is a simplified, orthogonal-view illustration of an embodiment of the reference beam-steering system of the present invention that utilizes fiber optics and a translation system.

5 FIGURE 19 is a simplified, orthogonal-view illustration of an embodiment of a reference beam-steering system of the present invention that utilizes fiber optics, a translation system, and a optical combiner unit.

10 FIGURE 20 is a schematic illustration of an object beam unit of the present invention that utilizes the fiber optics.

15 FIGURE 21 is a top-view, schematic drawing of one embodiment, which utilizes fiber optics, of the present invention for a one-step, full-color, full-parallax printer for holographic stereograms.

FIGURE 22 is a simplified, orthogonal-view illustration of an embodiment of a material holder of the present invention.

20 FIGURE 23 is a schematic illustration of an embodiment of the present invention with fixed object beam units and fixed reference beam-steering systems.

FIGURE 24 is a schematic illustration of an embodiment of the present invention with mobile object beam units and mobile reference beam-steering systems.

25 FIGURE 25 is a schematic illustration of another embodiment of the present invention with mobile object beam units and mobile reference beam-steering systems.

30 FIGURE 26 is a schematic illustration of yet another embodiment of the present invention with mobile object beam units and mobile reference beam-steering systems.

FIGUREs 27(a), (b), and (c) are orthogonal-view illustrations of removable band-limited diffusers and removable reference beam masking plates.

FIGURE 28 is a flow chart illustrating the steps for creating an animated, one-step, full-parallax holographic stereogram.

5 FIGURE 29 is an illustration of viewing zones for a holographic stereogram that displays different images when viewed from different viewing zones.

FIGURE 30 is an illustration of rays projecting from the perimeter of viewing zones.

10 FIGURE 31 is an illustration of viewing zone mask volumes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The following examples are included to demonstrate illustrative embodiments of the present invention. It should be appreciated by those with skill in the art that the techniques disclosed in the following examples represent techniques discovered by the inventors to function well in practice, and thus can be considered to constitute exemplary modes for its practice. However, those with skill in the art will, in light of the present disclosure, appreciate that many changes can be made in the specific embodiments which are disclosed and still obtain a like or similar result without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. For instance, a HOE or other appropriate optics may replace the combination of a lens and a band-limited diffuser. In addition, a HOE may also replace a lens or a combination of lenses. Furthermore, SLMs may include, but are not limited to LCD panels, digital micro-mirror arrays, film, or transparencies. In addition, computer storage devices may include, but are not limited to hard disks, static or dynamic RAM, flash memory, DVD drives, or tape drives. Moreover, motors may include, but are not limited to DC servo motors, stepper motors, or actuators.

The present invention provides a system and method for printing one-step, full-color, full-parallax holographic stereograms. Some presently illustrated embodiments are depicted in FIGURES 7-31.

5 One embodiment of the present invention for a printer is illustrated in FIGURE 7. As depicted in FIGURE 7, most of the parts of the printer, except for a computer 230 and controllers 305 and 455, are isolated from vibrations by, for example, being supported on vibration isolation table
10 80. The table 80 may be composed of steel with a honeycomb interior. The legs of the table 80 may be air pistons which can absorb vibrations. Other types of vibration isolation may also be acceptable. In some embodiments, the computer 230 and controllers 305 and 455 may be supported
15 on table 80. The computer 230 may have multiple ports and serial or parallel cables through which the computer 230 can control devices, like motor controllers, or through which the computer 230 can send output, such as images. In addition, computer 230 may have computational power and
20 speed sufficient for three-dimensional computer graphics. Furthermore, computer 230 may include one or more central processing unit and may include one or more storage devices, for example, hard disks, a redundant array of independent disks, FLASH memory, or static or dynamic RAM,
25 in which rendered images are stored. If more than one central processing unit is used, they may operate independently or in parallel. If more than one storage device is used, they may also operate independently or in parallel. In some embodiments, lasers 200 are not
30 supported by table 80. The lasers 200 may be lasers of three different colors. For example, one laser 200 may be a krypton ion or a HeNe laser to produce a red beam of light, another laser 200 may be an argon ion or a YAG laser to produce a green beam of light, and a third laser 200 may

be an argon ion or a HeCd laser to produce a blue beam of light. Other light wavelengths are also acceptable. In addition, lasers 200 may be solid state diodes or other types of lasers. The beams of light from the lasers 200 5 may go through open air. In addition, the beams of light from the lasers 200 may go through pipes so that instabilities due to air currents will be reduced. Also, the beams may be transmitted through polarization-preserving optical fibers.

10 In FIGURE 7, the coherent light beams 5 produced by the lasers 200 are directed at variable beam splitters 205. Variable beam splitters are half-mirrors that split a beam by reflecting part of the beam and transmitting most of the rest of the beam. If fiber optics are used to transmit 15 beams, then fiber optic beam splitters that work by contacting two parallel fibers together and letting the light from the fibers couple may be used. The coherent light beam 5 from each of the lasers 200 is split into two beams, an object beam 20 and a reference beam 25. In some 20 embodiments, each object beam 20 and each reference beam 25 may be directed through half-wave plates 30 and polarizers 35. In other embodiments, if polarization-retaining fiber optic cables are used to transmit a beam and if the cables are rotatable about their center axes, half-wave plates 30 25 need not be used. If needed, each object beam may be reflected off one or more mirror 40. The mirrors 40 of the present invention may be, for example, first surface or front surface mirrors. Each object beam 20 may be directed through a low pass spatial filter 220 to remove unwanted 30 noise. A low pass spatial filter 220 may include a microscope objective lens and a pinhole. Each object beam 20 may then pass through a beam shutter 225. In one embodiment, the beam shutters 225 may be high-speed, mechanical iris shutters, for example, those used in made

the photography industry. In other embodiments, the beam shutters 225 may be electro-optical systems such as liquid crystal cells or acousto-optical modulator crystals. In another embodiment, instead of using separate beam shutters 225, the SLM 90 in the object beam unit, generally 700, can function as a shutter for all three object beams. The shutters 225 are controlled by the computer 230. The object beams 20 may be then directed through an object beam unit 700. In the object beam unit 700, the object beams 20 may be directed such that the object beams 20 converge at the plane of a SLM 90. SLM 90 may include, but is not limited to, a transmissive LCD panel, a reflective LCD panel, an optically addressed LCD panel, a digital micro-mirror array, film, a projection or a transparency. The SLM 90 may receive image input by a video cable from the computer 230. In addition, multiple SLMs may receive images generated in parallel by multiple central processing units. Moreover, multiple SLMs may receive images from the storage device or devices of computer 230. After passing through the SLM 90, the object beam 20 may pass through a HOE 115, or another system, like those illustrated in FIGUREs 2-4, that is designed to converge the object beam and evenly expose an area the size of an elemental hologram. In one implementation, the HOE 115 may be a transmission-type hologram that can converge three different monochromatic object beams at slightly different angles onto the elemental holograms to be exposed without allowing zeroth-ordered light from any of the object beams to intersect the elemental holograms to be exposed. After passing through the object beam unit 700, the object beam 20 may then be transmitted through a voxel control lens 500 and may then expose an elemental hologram 110 on a holographic recording material 70 in a material holder 300. The holographic recording material 70 may be, but is not

5 limited to, a pan-chromatic photopolymer, a pan-chromatic or monochromatic silver halide photographic emulsion dichromated gelatin, or other suitable photopolymers. The holographic recording material 70 may be held securely by a material holder 300 that may be able to translate the holographic recording material in two directions. The movement of the material holder 300 may be controlled by film holder motor controller 305 which may be controlled by computer 230.

10 As further depicted in FIGURE 7, after the beams are split into object beams 20 and reference beams 25 by the variable beam splitters 205, each of the reference beams 25 passes through a variable attenuator 210 which allows the intensity of each reference beam 25 to be independently 15 adjusted. The reference beams may be reflected off of a mirror 40 before passing through dichroic combiners 215 or other suitable optical combiners. A dichroic combiner is a wavelength selective mirror which reflects some wavelengths, but is transparent to other wavelengths. The 20 dichroic combiners 215 in FIGURE 7 combine the three reference beams 25 into one beam which may pass through a beam shutter 225 before passing through a low pass spatial filter 220. The reference beam 25 then passes through a reference beam-steering system 400 which controls 25 the angle which the reference beam 25 intersects with the holographic recording material 70. A beam-steering mirror system of the reference beam-steering system is controlled by a mirror system motor controller 455 that is controlled by computer 230.

30 Furthermore, the present invention allows separate elemental holograms to be printed in different colors. For instance, by placing a beam shutter in the path of each object beam and reference beam and then selectively closing the beam shutters, one elemental hologram may be exposed to

only red object and reference beams, another may be exposed to only green object and reference beams, and another may be exposed to only blue object and reference beams.

An embodiment of the present invention in which 5 multiple elemental holograms are simultaneously exposed is depicted in FIGURE 8. The beams from lasers 200 are split by variable beam splitters 205 and then after being reflected by mirrors 40 are split again by additional variable beam splitters 205, thereby forming two or more 10 object beams 20 and two or more reference beams 25 from each laser 200. In other embodiments, the beams from laser 200 may be split even more times to form more object beams 20 and more reference beams 25. Each object beam 20 passes through a low pass filter 220 and a beam shutter 225. Each 15 set of three object beams 20 may be reflected by mirrors 40 and pass through a SLM 90, a HOE 115, and a voxel control lens 500 to expose an elemental hologram 110 on a holographic recording material 70 held by a material holder 300. The movement of the material holder 300 is controlled 20 by film holder motor controllers that are controlled by computer 230. Each set of three reference beams 25 passes through variable attenuators 210 and are combined into a beam by a dichroic combiner 215 or other suitable optical 25 combiners. Each of the resulting two reference beams 25 passes through a beam shutter 225 and a low pass spatial filter 220. Each reference beam 25 then passes through a beam-steering system 400 before hitting an elemental hologram 110. Thus, as depicted in FIGURE 8, multiple 30 elemental hologram may be simultaneously printed.

An embodiment of the present invention in which the variation in voxel size is controlled is illustrated by FIGURES 9 and 10. As shown in FIGURES 9 and 10, this control is accomplished by placing a voxel-control lens 500 in the path of an object beam 20 between SLM 90 and

holographic recording material 70. The voxel-control lens 500 may be placed in close proximity to holographic recording material 70. The voxel-control lens 500 may be capable of making an SLM or a projected image of a SLM seen from the viewpoint of an elemental hologram 110 appear at a greater apparent distance relative to the holographic recording material 70 during recording, so that a sample image point 100 on the SLM 90 surface is reconstructed at a greater distance away from the holographic recording material 70. FIGURE 10(a) illustrates how an image 505 of a SLM may appear to an elemental hologram 110 in a printer without a voxel-control lens. FIGURE 10(b) illustrates how an image 505 of a SLM may appear to an elemental hologram in a printer with a voxel-control lens 500. As shown in FIGURE 10, the voxel control lens magnifies the image 505 of a SLM, such that the angle α subtended by the image does not change but the angle ϕ subtended by an elemental hologram decreases to θ when a voxel control lens is used. The distance between the image 505 of a SLM and the holographic recording material 70 may be varied by varying the focal length of the voxel-control lens 500 or its position between the holographic recording surface 70 and the converging lens 55 or other optical systems, including simple diffuser or HOEs, as shown in Figures 1-3, used in the prior art to converge light onto the holographic recording material 70. In some embodiments, the voxel control lens 500 may be part of the object beam unit 700.

In one particular embodiment of this invention, it is possible to make the voxel sizes fairly constant over a wide range of distances from a holographic recording material 70. This is accomplished by choosing a voxel-control lens 500 with a focal length equal to the distance between the voxel-control lens 500 and the actual location of the SLM or the location of a projected image of the SLM

as seen by an elemental hologram in a printer without a voxel-control lens. Such a voxel-control lens 500 and geometrical layout will effectively reconstruct the SLM 120 at an infinite distance relative to holographic recording material 70. If the size of the pixels 95 on a SLM 90 are small compared to the size of the elemental holograms 110, the voxel 140 boundary lines for such an embodiment will no longer intersect close to the holographic recording material 70 as depicted in FIGURE 6, but instead become approximately parallel lines which extend out to a great distance without intersecting as shown in Figure 11.

Although the characteristics of a voxel-control lens 500 may depend on the desired results, typically it is desirable for the voxel-control lens 500 to be achromatic and have an f-number of around 3.0 or lower. In one particular embodiment, the voxel-control lens may be achromatic and have an f-number of 2.4. In other embodiments, the voxel-control lens may have lower f-numbers, such as 0.5. Lower f-numbers are desirable because they allow for a wider angle of view. In yet other embodiments, the voxel-control lens may be monochromatic.

Figure 12 depicts yet another embodiment of the present invention. Referring to Figures 12-16, a reference beam-steering system, generally 400, may use a beam-steering mirror system 450 to direct a reference beam 25, through a first beam-steering lens 410 and a second beam-steering lens 405 to an elemental hologram 110 on a holographic recording material 70 which, if desired, may be inclined with respect to the normal to the center axis 420.

The beam-steering mirror system, generally 450, may be embodied in various ways. One particular embodiment is depicted in Figure 15. In Figure 15, a deflection mirror 460 is fixedly mounted to a first rotatable mount 465, such that when the first rotatable mount 465 rotates, the

deflection mirror 460 rotates about a first axis 451 which passes through center point 461 of the deflection mirror 460. A motor for the first rotatable mount 470, which is controlled by a motor controller 455, rotates the first rotatable mount 465. The motor for the first rotatable mount 470 is fixedly attached to a support 475. First rotatable mount 465 is rotatably mounted to a support 475 with bearings or bushings to allow the first rotatable mount 465 to rotate about the first axis 451. Support 475 is fixedly mounted by an attaching device on a second rotatable mount 480 such that when the second rotatable mount 480 rotates, the deflection mirror 460 rotates about a second axis 452 which passes through the center point 461 of the deflection mirror 460 and which is orthogonal to the first axis 451. A motor for the second rotatable mount 485, which is controlled by a motor controller 455, rotates the second rotatable mount 480. The motor for the second rotatable mount may be fixedly attached to a vibration isolation table 80. The motors for the first and second rotatable mounts, 470 and 485, may be, but are not limited to, stepper motors or DC servo motors. The same or a separate motor controller 455 controlled by computer 230 may control the motors for the first and second rotatable mounts 470 and 480.

Another embodiment of a beam-steering mirror system 450 is a deflection mirror attached to a gimbal mount. In Figure 16, a deflection mirror 460 is fixedly mounted to a first axle 490 such that the deflection mirror 460 rotates about a first axis 451 which passes through the center point 461 of the deflection mirror 460. First axle 490 is rotated by a motor 491 for the first axle which is controlled by a motor controller 455. The motor 491 for the first axle is fixedly attached to a first gimbal mount 494. First axle 490 is rotatably mounted by bearing or

bushing to the first gimbal mount 494. The first gimbal mount 494 is fixedly mounted by an attaching device to a second axle 492 at the opposite ends of a diameter of the first gimbal mount 494 that coincides with a second axis 5 452. Second axle 492 is rotated by a motor 493 for the second axle and is controlled by a motor controller 455. The deflection mirror 460 rotates about the second axis 452 which passes through the center point 461 of the deflection mirror 460 and which is orthogonal to the first axis 451. 10 Second axle 492 is rotatably mounted by bearing or bushing to a second gimbal mount 496. The motors 491 and 493, for the first and second axles, 491 and 493, may be, but are not limited to, stepper motors or DC servo motors. The same or separate motor controllers 455, controlled by a 15 computer 230, may control the motors for the first and second axles, 491 and 493.

As shown in Figures 12-16, the center axis 420 of the beam-steering lenses 405, 410 intersects the first axis 451 and the second axis 452 and passes through the center of an 20 elemental hologram. A reference beam 25 may be directed at the center point 461 of the deflection mirror 460. A computer 230 controls the mirror system motor controller or controllers 455 of the beam-steering mirror system 450, such that a reference beam 25 reflected off the deflection 25 mirror 460 hits an elemental hologram 110 on a holographic recording material 70 at a desired angle. The deflection mirror 460 may be placed at a distance of one focal length 411 of the first beam-steering lens away from a first beam-steering lens 410. The first beam-steering lens 410 may be placed at a distance of the sum of the focal length 411 of the first beam-steering lens and the focal length 406 of the second beam-steering lens away from the second beam-steering lens 405. The second beam-steering lens 405 may be placed at a distance of one focal length 406 of the 30

second beam-steering lens, away from the holographic recording material 70. The beam-steering system 400 of the present invention allows the reference beam 25 to be steered to intersect with elemental hologram 110 at 5 different angles.

In another embodiment, depicted in Figure 13, the beam-steering system 400 of the present invention may include a reference-beam converging lens 415 which may be achromatic or monochromatic. After a reference beam 25 passes through the reference-beam converging lens 415, the reference beam 25 is reflected by a beam-steering mirror system 450 before passing through beam-steering lenses 410 and 405. The first and second beam-steering lenses 410, 405 are placed such that the reference beam 25 that passes 10 through the converging lens and the first beam-steering lens 410 converges in the focal plane 425 of the second beam-steering lens 405. In addition, the center point 461 shown in Figures 15 and 16 of a deflection mirror 460 are shown in Figures 15 and 16 is located at a distance of one 15 focal length 411 of the first beam-steering lens from the first beam-steering lens 410. Furthermore, the elemental hologram 110 to be exposed is located at a distance of one focal length of the second beam-steering lens 406 away from the second beam-steering lens 305.

In another embodiment, depicted in Figure 14, the beam-steering system 400 of the present invention may include a beam-steering aperture 430 which eliminates the need to have a reference beam masking plate. In an embodiment, a reference beam 25 passes through a beam-steering aperture 430 that has the aperture of the area of the elemental hologram 110 to be exposed. If the reference beam passes through lenses that magnify or minify it, then the beam-steering aperture 430 should be sized such that the cross-section of the reference beam that intersects the 25 30

elemental hologram to be exposed has the same size and shape of the elemental hologram. The reference beam 25 then passes through two aperture relay lenses 435, is reflected off of a deflection mirror 460 (shown in Figures 5 15 and 16) of the beam-steering mirror system 450, passes through the first beam-steering lens 410, passes through the second beam-steering lens 405, and then intersects the elemental hologram 110 to be exposed. The beam-steering aperture 430 is placed at a distance of one focal length 10 436 of the aperture relay lenses from one aperture relay lens 435. The aperture relay lenses 435 are located two focal lengths 436 of the aperture relay lens away from each other. Then the center point 461 (shown in Figures 15 and 16) of the deflection mirror 460 (shown in Figures 15 and 15 16) is located at a distance of one focal length 436 of the aperture relay lens away from the second aperture lens 435 that the reference beam passes through.

Another embodiment of a reference beam-steering system 400 is illustrated by Figures 17, 18, and 21. In this 20 embodiment, an optical coupler lens 670 channels a reference beam 25 that has just passed through a beam shutter to the fiber optic end 660 of a fiber optic cable 650. The fiber optic cable 650 delivers the reference beam 25 to a fiber optic tip 655 which is placed in the focal 25 plane 425 of a second beam-steering lens 405. The reference beam 25 passes through a beam-steering lens 405 to an elemental hologram 110. The beam-steering lens 405 is located at a distance of one focal length 406 of the second beam-steering lens from the elemental hologram 110 30 being exposed. The fiber optic tip 655 is translated by a translation system, generally 600.

Figure 19 illustrates another embodiment of the reference beam-steering system 400. In this embodiment, three reference beams 25 which may each be a different

color are channeled by three optical coupler lenses 670 toward three fiber optic ends 660 of three fiber optic cables 650. The fiber optic cables 650 deliver the reference beams 25 to fiber optic tips 655 to direct the 5 reference beams 25 into optical combiner unit 640. Optical combiner unit 640 may have two dichroic combiners 215, which may combine the three reference beams 25 into a single reference beam 25, other suitable optical combiners. The optical combiner unit 640 is placed in the focal plane 10 425 (shown in Figure 17) of a beam-steering lens 405. The single reference beam 25 from the optical combiner unit 640 passes through the beam-steering lens 405 to an elemental hologram 110. The beam-steering lens 405 is located at a distance of one focal length 406 of the beam-steering lens 15 from the elemental hologram 110 being exposed. The optical combiner unit 640 is fixedly mounted to a platform 630 which is fixedly mounted to a second movable support 622.

In another embodiment, three reference beams 25 are transmitted by fiber optic cables 650 to a optical combiner 20 unit 640. The single reference beam 25 that is output from the optical combiner unit 640 is channeled by an optical coupler lens 670 into a single fiber optic cable 650 which is attached to and carried by an attaching device to a translation system 600. The fiber optic tip 655 of the 25 single fiber optic cable 650 is located in a focal plane 425 of a beam-steering lens 405.

In still another embodiment, the three reference beams 25 are transmitted by fiber optic cables 650 to a optical combiner unit 640. The single reference beam 25 that is output from the optical combiner unit 640 passes through a beam shutter 225 before it is channeled by an optical coupler lens 670 into a single fiber optic cable 650 which is fixedly attached to a translation system 600. The fiber

optic tip 655 of the fiber optic cable 650 is located in a focal plane 425 of a beam-steering lens 405.

5 The translation system 600, as depicted in Figure 18 and Figure 19, is able to translate in two orthogonal directions. The translation system includes a x-translation stage and y-translation stage.

10 One illustrative embodiment of a x-translation stage 680 includes a first lead screw 602 which is rotatably mounted by bushing, bearing, or other rotatable means to first end plates 608, and which may be rotated about the axis 601 of the first lead screw by a motor 604 for the first lead screw which is fixedly mounted to one of the first end plates 608. Two first guide bars 610 are fixedly mounted to the first end plates 608 such that the first 15 guide bars 610 lie parallel to the axis of the first lead screw 601. The two first guide bars 610 pass through two holes in a first movable support 612. The first lead screw 602 is threaded through a hole in the first movable support 612. Thus, in this embodiment of the x-translation stage 20 680, when the first lead screw 602 is rotated by the motor 604 for the first lead screw, the first movable support 612 will move along the axis 601 of the first lead screw.

25 One illustrative embodiment of a y-translation stage 680 includes a second lead screw 618 which is rotatably mounted by bushing, bearing, or other rotatable means to second end plates 614, and which may be rotated about the axis 617 of the second lead screw 618 by a motor 620 for the second lead screw which is mounted to one of the second end plates 614. The other of the second end plates 614 is 30 mounted to the first movable support 612 such that the axis 617 of the second lead screw is orthogonal to the axis 601 of the first lead screw. Two second guide bars 616 are fixedly mounted to the second end plates 614 such that the second guide bars 616 lie parallel to the axis 617 of the

second lead screw. The two second guide bars 616 pass through two holes in a second movable support 622. The second lead screw 618 is threaded through a hole in the second movable support 622. Thus, in this embodiment of 5 the y-translation device 690, when the second lead screw 618 is rotated by the motor for the second lead screw 620, the second movable support 622 will move along the axis 617 of the second lead screw.

The motors 604 and 620, for the first and second lead 10 screws which may be, but are not limited to stepper, DC servo or linear motors, may be controlled by a motor controller 606 for the motors for the lead screws which may be controlled by computer 230.

Although the types, focal lengths, and number of beam-steering lenses may be varied, for some embodiments, it may 15 be desirable for the beam-steering lenses to be achromatic and have f-numbers of around 3.0 or less. In other embodiments, it may be desirable for the beam-steering lenses to be achromatic, confocal, f- θ lenses, which are 20 also known as flat-field laser-scan lenses. In some embodiments, it may also be desirable to have lenses of lower f-number to allow for a wider range of reference beams. In one particular embodiment, it may be desirable 25 to have the beam-steering lenses be achromatic and have f-numbers of around 1.0. In addition, the beam-steering lenses may be monochromatic in other embodiments.

The beam-steering system of the present invention may be utilized to create holographic stereograms that display 30 a particular image when illuminated by an illumination source from one angle, but display another image when illuminated by an illumination source from another angle. For instance, after exposing an elemental hologram with an object beam conditioned with a particular image on an SLM and a reference beam at a particular angle, the elemental

hologram may then be exposed to an object beam conditioned with another image on the SLM and a reference beam at another angle. In addition, a set of elemental holograms on a holographic recording material may be exposed by a reference beam at a particular angle, while another set of elemental holograms may be exposed by a reference beam at another angle. Thus, a printer of this invention can create a holographic stereogram that displays a different image depending on the angle of the illumination source. Furthermore, the same printer with a beam-steering system may be used to create multiple holographic stereograms, each with a different reference angle, such that the images of each will only appear when illuminated by an illumination source at the correct angle. If such multiple holographic stereograms are mounted on top of each other, then different images may be displayed by simply changing the angle at which the illumination source intersects the holographic recording materials.

Another embodiment of the present invention, illustrated by Figure 20, utilizes multiple SLMs 90 to produce full-color holographic stereograms. In Figure 20, two dichroic combiners 215 in an "x" configuration, or other suitable optical combiners, may be used in combination with three object beams 20, one object beam being red light, the other green light, and the other blue light. The three object beams 20 may be directed through three separate gray-scale SLMs 90. In one embodiment of the present invention the SLMs are LCD panels of high resolution such as 1,280 x 1,024 pixels where the total size of the LCD panel is approximately 10cm x 10cm. However, smaller LCD panels may be used. For instance, LCD panels with the same or fewer number of pixels but that are around 2cm x 2cm in size or smaller may be used.

In an embodiment shown in Figure 20 and Figure 21, after passing through beam shutters 225, object beams 20 are directed through optical coupler lenses 670 to converge at fiber optic ends 660. The object beam 20 are then 5 transmitted by fiber optic cables 650 to the fiber optic tips 655 which are placed in the focal planes of singlet lenses 705. The object beams 20 may pass through the singlet lenses 705, if necessary, reflect off mirrors 40, and pass through SLMs 90 and band-limited diffusers 45, 10 which may be color specific. The singlet lenses 705 expand and collimate the object beams 20 such that the object beams 20 may more evenly illuminate the SLMs 90. The object beams 20 are then directed through a optical combiner unit 640 that may use two dichroic combiners 215 15 in an "x" configuration, or other suitable optical combiners, to combine the three object beams 20 into a single beam. The single object beam 20 may then pass through a first projection lens 715 and a Fourier transform filter 710 that may remove undesired effects such as, but 20 not limited to, high frequency image components such as pixel or grid artifacts that resulted from an SLM display with pixels. The object beam 20 may then pass through a second projection lens 720 and then a converging lens 55. The first projection lens 715 is located such that images 25 of the SLMs all lie in the focal plane of the first projection lens. The Fourier transform filter 710 is located in the focal planes of both the first projection lens and the second projection lens. The converging lens 55 is located such that its focal plane intersects the 30 holographic recording material 70 at the elemental hologram 110 to be exposed. In other embodiments of the object beam unit 700, the first and second projection lenses 715 and 720 and the Fourier transform filter 710 are not used. In still other embodiments of the object beam unit 700, a

voxel control lens 500 may be included in the object beam unit 700 and lie in close proximity to the holographic recording material 70.

5 In one embodiment of the present invention, a material holder, generally 300, may be used to translate holographic recording material 70. As depicted in Figures 22-25, a material holder 300 may include a frame 324 attached to a x-translation stage 680 that is attached to a y-translation stage 690.

10 An embodiment of the y-translation stage 680, as depicted in Figures 22-25, may have first holder end plates 302 to which first holder guide rods 306 are fixedly attached. A first holder lead screw 308 and a first holder driven lead screw 309 are rotatably attached by bushing or bearing or other suitable means to the first holder end plates 302. The first holder lead screw 308 and the first holder guide rods 306 are parallel to the axis of the first holder driven lead screw 307. The first holder driven lead screw 309 may be rotated by a motor 310 for the first holder driven lead screw, which is controlled by holder motor controller 305, which is controlled by computer 230. The motor 310 may also drive both lead screws 308 and 309 with a timing belt or other linkage. In addition, two motors 310, each coupled to a lead screw, may drive the lead screws. The first holder driven lead screw 309 passes through a threaded hold in the a first holder movable support 312. The two first holder guide rods 306 in close proximity to the first holder driven lead screw 309 pass through holes in the same first holder movable support 312. 20 The first holder lead screw 308 passes through a threaded hole in another first holder movable support 312, and the two first holder guide rods 306 in close proximity to the first holder lead screw 308 pass through holes in the same first holder movable support 312. 25 The first holder lead screw 308 passes through a threaded hole in another first holder movable support 312, and the two first holder guide rods 306 in close proximity to the first holder lead screw 308 pass through holes in the same first holder movable support 312. 30

An embodiment of the x-translation stage 680, as depicted in Figures 22-26, may have a second holder lead screw 318 and a first holder driven lead screw 319 rotatably attached by bushing or bearing or other suitable means to second holder end plates 314. The axis of the second holder driven lead screw 317 is orthogonal to the axis of the first holder driven lead screw 307. The second holder lead screw 318 and the second holder guide rods 316 are parallel to the axis of the second holder driven lead screw 317. The second holder driven lead screw 319 may be rotated by a motor 320, for the second holder driven lead screw which is controlled by holder motor controller 305, which is controlled by computer 230. The second holder driven lead screw 319 passes through a threaded hole in the a second holder movable support 322. The two second holder guide rods 316 in close proximity to the second holder driven lead screw 319 pass through holes in the same second holder movable support 322. The second holder lead screw 318 passes through a threaded hole in another second holder movable support 322, and the two second holder guide rods 316 in close proximity to the second holder lead screw 318 pass through holes in the same second holder movable support 322.

As depicted in FIGUREs 22 and 23, the x-translation stage 680 may be mounted to the y-translation stage 690. In one embodiment, the first holder movably supports 312 are fixedly mounted to the second holder end plages 314. The second holder movable supports 322 are fixedly attached to a frame 324. A second frame 324 may be clamped to a first frame 324 by detachable couplings 325 which may include, but are not limited to, clamps, snaps, screws, and bolts. A holographic recording material may be held in between two detachably coupled frames 324. In an alternative embodiment, the natural adhesive property of a

holographic recording material may hold the material on one side of a transparent plate that is secured to frames 324. The frames 324 may be composed of stress-relieved aluminum, titanium, composites, or other rigid, strong, and 5 lightweight materials.

As illustrated in FIGURE 23, object beam units 700 and reference beam-steering systems 400 may be fixed to bases 326.

As illustrated in FIGURES 24 and 25, one or more 10 object beam units 700 may be fixedly mounted to unit mounts 328 which are fixedly mounted to second holder movable supports 322 of a x-translation stage 680. Similarly, one or more reference beam-steering systems 400 may be fixedly mounted to other second unit mounts 328 which are fixedly 15 mounted to other holder movable supports 322 of another x-translation stage 680. In addition, in some embodiments, a frame 324 may be fixed to the first movable supports 312 of a y-translation stage 690. Thus, in some embodiments, the holographic recording material 70 clamped between two 20 frames 324 may translate vertically, while the object beam units 700 and reference beam-steering systems 400 translate horizontally.

In the embodiment depicted in FIGURE 24, two motors 320, which are controlled by holder motor controller 305, 25 drive the second holder driven lead screws 319 of the x-translation stages 680. In an alternative embodiment depicted in FIGURE 25, one motor 320, in combination with a timing belt 330 that is linked to a belt mount 332 that is fixedly attached to one of the second holder driven lead screws 319, drives both second holder driven lead screws 30 319 of the x-translation stages 680.

In another embodiment depicted in FIGURE 26, the object beam units 700 and reference beam-steering systems 400 are attached to unit mounts 328 which are attached to

the second holder movable supports 322 of x-translation stages 680. A holographic recording material 70 translates vertically by a y-axis roller system 350 with rollers 342 and 344. The holographic recording material 70 may be wrapped around a top roller 342 and a bottom roller 344. The top and bottom rollers 342 and 344 are rotatably mounted by bushing, bearing, or other suitable means between roller end plates 340. The top roller 342 may be rotated by a motor for the rollers 346, which is controlled by a motor controller 305 which is controlled by a computer 230.

The motors used in the various embodiments of the translation systems may be, but are not limited to stepper motors.

As depicted in FIGURES 23-26, there may be simultaneous or parallel printing of elemental holograms. In some embodiments, the printer may include object beam units and reference beam-steering systems attached to translation systems with x-translation stages that are attached to y-translation stages. In such systems, the holographic recording material may be fixed, while the object beam units and reference beam-steering systems are moved by the translation system to record an array of elemental holograms.

In an alternative embodiment, multiple layers of holographic recording material 70 may be held in a material holder 300. In addition, each layer may be sensitive to a particular wavelength of light.

In another embodiment of the present invention, for a given object beam, a matched set of a band-limited diffusers 45 and a reference beam masking plate 65 may be configured to allow for even exposure of an elemental hologram 110 of a particular size or shape and to prevent exposing portions of the holographic recording material 70

that are not part of the elemental hologram 110 intended to be exposed. As illustrated by FIGURES 27(a), (b), and (c), matched sets of band-limited diffusers 45 and reference beam masking plates 65 can be constructed to allow the 5 exposure of elemental holograms 110 of different sizes or shapes. If the sets of band-limited diffusers 45 and reference beam masking plates 65 are constructed such that the band-limited diffusers 45. of all the sets have the same outer dimensions and can be placed in the same 10 position in a hologram printer, and such that the reference beam masking plates 65 of all the sets have the same outer dimensions and can be placed in the same position in a hologram printer, then sets can be conveniently switched to easily change the size of the elemental hologram printed. 15 Thus, a matched set of a band-limited diffuser 45 and a reference beam masking plate 65 can be replaced with another set of a band-limited diffuser 45 and a reference beam masking plate 65 so as to allow printing of a larger, smaller, or differently shaped elemental hologram. As 20 depicted in FIGURE 27(B), a band-limited diffuser 45 may be mounted onto a plate 510 housed in a threaded frame 515. The plate 510 may be a sheet transparent sheet of glass with an anti-reflective coating. The threaded frame 515 may be threaded into positioning device 525 which has a 25 base 526 and a threaded ring 520. The positioning device 520 may allow translational adjustment in three orthogonal directions by three adjustable screws 530. As depicted in FIGURE 27(c), a reference beam masking plate 65 may be housed in a threaded plate frame 560. A threaded plate 30 frame 560 may be threaded into a threaded positioning device 565.

Some examples of full-color embodiments of the present invention are depicted in FIGURES 7, 8, 19, and 21. Another embodiment of the present invention includes a

full-color print with three different colored lasers, optical combiners, such as but not limited to dichroic combiners, to combine the three beams from the lasers, a full-color SLM, and achromatic optics to print full-color 5 holographic stereograms. Still another embodiment of the present invention includes a full-color printer with three different colored lasers, an object beam unit that combines three object beams using three beam-limited diffusers, three gray-scale SLMs, and an optical combiner, achromatic 10 optics, such as achromatic lenses, to manipulate or condition the full-color beams produced by the printer, and an optical combiner to combine three reference beams into a combined, full-color, reference beam. Yet another embodiment of the present invention includes a full-color 15 printer with three different colored lasers, an object beam unit with an HOE that combines three different colored object beams into one combined, full-color, object beam and that also evenly distributes the combined object beam over an elemental hologram, an optical combiner to combine three 20 reference beams into a combined, full-color, reference beam, and achromatic optics to manipulate or condition the full-colored beams.

Another aspect of the present invention involves a 25 method of creating animated, one-step, full-parallax, holographic stereograms. One embodiment involves using multiple or sub-divided viewing zones, which typically are not needed to produce static image, full-parallax holographic stereograms, to produce one-step, full-parallax, holographic stereograms that can display animated 30 subjects or different images through different viewing zones. Viewing zones are typically planar areas located at a distance from the holographic recording material in which a viewer's eye looking through that plane could see the holographic image produced by an array of elemental

holograms. Thus, a viewing zone may be analogous to a window in front of a hologram. However, rather than being planar, viewing zones may also be constructed from a series of points. Unlike traditional techniques for producing 5 one-step, full-parallax holographic stereograms in which the view of a three-dimensional object or a scene is determined for each elemental hologram, the present invention produces animated, one-step, full-parallax holographic stereograms by determining the view of an 10 object or scene that an observer would see in each viewing zone.

Referring to FIGUREs 28-31, and assuming that a voxel-control lens 500 is used such that the image 505 (shown in FIGURE 10(b)) of an SLM would appear at an infinite distance 15 from the surface of the holographic recording material, the steps for producing a holographic element of an animated holographic stereogram or a holographic stereogram that displays different images in different viewing zones are as follows.

- 20 1) Select the size and shape of a holographic stereogram, and the size and shape of its elemental holograms.
- 2) Select the desired effect. One example of an effect is changing the orientation of an object or a scene (e.g., its position or rotation) when a viewer moves. Another example of an effect is changing the shape or color of an object or a scene when a view moves.
- 25 3) Select the reference illumination geometry for the final holographic stereogram.
- 4) Select the shape(s), size(s), and location(s) of the viewing zone or zones with respect to the holographic recording material. In the plane of the viewing zone, a viewer would see a sharper 30

transition between the different objects or scenes depicted by the holographic stereogram than a viewer not in the plane of the viewing zones. Thus, it may be desirable to select the 5 location of the viewing zones to be at a distance from the holographic recording material where most viewers would be located.

- 10 5) Select the objects or scenes or the attributes of the objects or scenes to be displayed by the holographic stereogram.
- 15 6) Select the location and placement with respect to the holographic recording material of the holographic images of the objects that will be displayed by the holographic stereogram to be created (i.e. whether the image will be located in front of, in back of, or straddle the holographic recording material).
- 20 7) Using a computer 230, generate computer models and model attributes for each viewing zone using traditional computer graphic techniques and programs of the objects or scenes. For instance, generate a computer model of an object 'A' 835 which can only be seen from one viewing zone 805, and generate a computer model of an object 'B' 840 which can only be seen from another viewing zone 810.
- 25 8) Set up the hologram printer. For instance, put holographic recording material 70 (shown in FIGURE 7) into a material holder 300 (shown in FIGURE 7), calibrate and initialize beam shutters 225 (shown in FIGURE 7), motor controllers 305, 455 the SLM 90 (shown in FIGURE 7), the beam-steering system 400 (shown in FIGURE 7), and

initialize the computer graphics program, and the computer 230 (shown in FIGURE 7).

9) Using a computer 230, for each elemental hologram 110 in a holographic stereogram that may be one-step, full-parallax, holographic stereogram:

A) Project lines from the perimeter of the elemental hologram 110 through the perimeter of each of the view zones 805 and 810. Since in a typical printer, a SLM is usually centered in front of an elemental hologram when the elemental hologram is exposed, the virtual image of the SLM that an elemental hologram would see through a voxel-control lens is also usually centered in front of the elemental hologram, as shown in FIGURE 29. As depicted in FIGURE 30, the projected lines intersect a virtual two-dimensional image 505 (shown in FIGURE 10(b)) of a SLM image. The elemental hologram will only see the portion of the virtual image 505 of the SLM, such as 815 or 820, bounded by the projecting lines. As shown in FIGURE 30, the projected lines define mask volumes 825, 830, which may differ from one elemental hologram to another for a given viewing zone.

B) For a desired viewing zone mask volume, such as 825, for an elemental hologram 100, using traditional rendering techniques, such as but not limited to, ray-tracing or scan-line conversion, render the portion of the appropriate computer model of an object or scene 835 (shown in FIGURE 30) enclosed by the projected mask volume 825 to create a

complete two-dimensional image of a projection on the portion of the virtual image 505 of the SLM of the computer graphic models of the objects or scenes 835 or 840 from the perspective of an elemental hologram. For instance, if a person were to look at a particular elemental hologram from within a mask volume 825, only the 'A' object 835 is seen. From mask volume 825, the 'B' object 840 is not viewable. Thus, to a viewer in mask volume 825, the bottom of the virtual image of the SLM is not visible. Similarly, if a person were to look at the particular elemental hologram from within a mask volume 830, only the 'B' object 840 is seen. From mask volume 830, the 'A' object 835 is not viewable. Thus, to a viewer in mask volume 830, the top of the virtual image of the SLM is not visible.

In an alternative embodiment, rendering for multiple elemental holograms may be completed before exposing any of

the elemental holograms on a holographic recording material.

In an alternative embodiment, the same method applied for creating holographic stereograms with changing views 5 may be used to create a holographic optical element (HOE). For instance, if it is desirable to create a HOE that acts like a lens to converge diverging white light to a point, then by using the same viewing zone method as described, but determining a view point located at where the light 10 should be focused, rather than a view zone, a HOE may be created. Alternatively, such a HOE can be created by determining a white computer-graphic object with the exact size, shape, and position of a given voxel, and printing a holographic stereogram of such an object.

15 In one embodiment of the present invention, the same computer 230 may be programmed to control the motors controlling the beam shutters, the motor controllers for the beam-steering mirror system, the motor controllers for the translation systems, conducts the computer graphics 20 creation and rendering, and controls the display of the SLM. In an alternative embodiment, the same computer may also conduct the computations necessary for animation. The computer 230 may be connected to the beam shutters, the motor controllers for the beam-steering mirror system, and 25 the SLM, through cables connected at both ends to serial or parallel communication ports. One end of the cables may be connected to the communication ports of the computer and the other ends of the cables may be connected to the devices controlled by the computer. In other embodiments, 30 multiple computers 230 may be used.

While the methods and apparatus of this invention have been described in terms of illustrated embodiments, it will be apparent to those of skill in the art that variations, such as but not limited to different combination of lens

set-ups to create the same effect as the voxel-control lens or the beam-steering lenses described herein, may be applied to the methods and apparatus and in the step or in the sequence of steps of the methods described herein 5 without departing from the concepts, spirit and scope of the invention. All substitutes and modifications apparent to those skilled in the art are deemed to be within the spirit, scope and concept of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms, comprising:

5 a light source that produces a coherent beam;
a beam splitter that splits the coherent beam into an object beam and a reference beam;
a material holder holding a holographic recording material having elemental holograms;

10 an object beam unit for displaying a rendered image and for conditioning the object beam with the rendered image to interfere with the reference beam at a chosen elemental hologram;

15 a reference beam-steering system for directing the reference beam to interfere with the object beam at the chosen elemental hologram; and
a computer programmed to control the interference of the object beam and the reference beam and the delivery of the rendered image to the object beam unit.

20

2. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 1, further comprising:

25 a first beam shutter placed in the path of the object beam; and
a second beam shutter placed in the path of the reference beam.

30

3. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 1, the light source comprising a laser.

4. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 1, further comprising three light sources, each light source being a laser.

5. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 4, one laser producing a blue light, one laser producing a red light, and one laser producing a green light.

5

6. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 1, the object beam unit including a SLM for displaying the rendered image.

10

7. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 6, further comprising multiple light sources that produce multiple object beams, said multiple object beams directed at the SLM.

15

8. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 6, further comprising multiple object beams and multiple SLMs, each object beam directed towards at least one SLM.

20

9. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 6, the object beam unit including a HOE in the path of the object beam.

25

10. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 9, the HOE converging and evenly distributing the object beam over the chosen elemental hologram.

30

11. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 1, the object beam unit including a band-limited diffuser in the path of the object beam and a converging lens in the part of the object beam.

12. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 1, the object beam unit comprising a fiber optic cable that transmits the object beam.

5 13. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 12, the object beam unit comprising:

multiple light sources that produce multiple object beams;

10 multiple fiber optic cables, each transmitting a respective object beam;

a single lens, a SLM, and a band-limited diffuser in the path of each object beam; and

15 an optical combiner unit in the path of each of the multiple object beams combining the multiple object beams into a combined object beam that intersects the chosen elemental hologram.

14. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 13, the object beam unit further comprising:

20 a converging lens in the path of the combined object beam; and

a pair of projection lenses located in the path of the combined object beam between the optical combiner unit and the converging lens.

25

15. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 14, the object beam unit further comprising, a Fourier transform filter located between the two projection lenses.

30

16. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 1, the object beam unit comprising a voxel-control lens proximate to the holographic recording material.

17. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 1, the computer comprising at least one central processing unit.

5 18. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 17, at least one of the central processing units programmed to render the image that is delivered to the object beam unit.

10 19. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 17, the computer comprising at least one storage device operating to receive the rendered image from at least one of the central processing units.

15 20. A apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 19, the object beam unit comprising multiple SLMs, each SLM receiving a rendered image from at least one of the storage devices.

20 21. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 1, the reference beam-steering system comprising a beam-steering mirror system.

25 22. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 21, the beam-steering mirror system comprising:
a mirror with a center point, a first axis passing through the center point, and a second axis passing through the center point and orthogonal to the first axis;
a first mount supporting the mirror for rotating the mirror about the first axis; and
30 a second mount supporting the first mount for rotating the mirror about the second axis.

23. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 22, the first mount including a first motor responsive to the computer that controls the rotation of the mirror about the first axis.

5

24. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 22, the second mount including a second motor responsive to the computer that controls the rotation of the mirror about the second axis.

10

25. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 21, the reference beam-steering system further comprising a first beam-steering lens in the path of the reference beam and a second beam-steering lens in the path 15 of the reference beam.

26. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 25, the reference beam-steering system further comprising a reference beam converging lens through which 20 a reference beam passes as it enters the beam-steering system.

27. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 25, the reference beam-steering system further 25 comprising a beam-steering aperture and aperture relay lenses, said reference beam passing through the beam-steering aperture and the aperture relay lenses as it enters the beam-steering system.

28. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 1, the reference beam-steering system comprising:

5 a fiber optic cable for transmitting the reference beam, the fiber optic cable having an output end; a translation system for moving said output end; and a beam-steering lens in the path of the reference beam.

10 29. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 28, wherein the computer is programmed to control the movement of the translation system.

15 30. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 28, the reference beam-steering system further comprising a masking plate in the path of the reference beam and proximate to the holographic recording material.

20 31. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 28, the translation system having a first axis and a second axis orthogonal to said first axis and including a first-translation stage for translation along the first axis and a second-translation stage for 25 translation along the second axis.

32. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 28, further comprising:

30 a) multiple fiber optic cables for transmitting multiple reference beams, each fiber optic cable having an output end; and

b) an optical combiner unit attached to the translation system and also attached to each fiber optic cable output end.

33. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 1, the material holder comprising a first-translation stage operable in response to the computer to translate the material holder along a first axis.

5

34. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 33, the material holder comprising a second-translation stage operable in response to the computer to translate the material holder along a second axis that is orthogonal to the first axis.

10

35. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 1, wherein:

15

the material holder includes a first-translation stage and two second-translation stages;

the holographic recording material has a front side and a back side, the holographic recording material being attached to the first-translation stage;

20

at least one object beam unit is fixed to one of the second-translation stages and is located on the front side of the holographic recording material; and

at least one reference-beam-steering system is fixed to the other second-translation stage is located on the back side of the holographic recording material.

36. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms, comprising:

a light source that produces a coherent beam;

5 a beam splitter that splits the coherent beam into an object beam and a reference beam;

a material holder holding a holographic recording material having elemental holograms;

10 an object beam unit, including a removable band-limited diffuser, for displaying a rendered image and for conditioning the object beam with the rendered image to interfere with the reference beam at a chosen elemental hologram;

15 a removable masking plate located in the path of the reference beam and proximate to the holographic recording material; and

a computer programmed to control the interference of the object beam and the reference beam and the delivery of the rendered image to the object beam unit.

20 37. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in Claim 36, the removable masking plate having at least one positioning adjustment device.

25 38. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms, as in Claim 36, the removable band-limited diffuser having at least one positioning adjustment device.

39. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms, comprising

a light source that produces a coherent beam;

5 a beam splitter that splits the coherent beam into an object beam and a reference beam;

a material holder holding a holographic recording material having elemental holograms;

10 an object beam unit for displaying a rendered image and the conditioning the object beam with the rendered image to interfere with the reference beam at a chosen elemental hologram;

a voxel-control lens located in the path of the object beam and proximate to the holographic recording material; and

15 a computer programmed to control the interference of the object beam and the reference beam and the delivery of the rendered image to the object beam unit.

40. An apparatus for printing holographic stereogram as in Claim 39, wherein:

20 the object beam unit includes a SLM for displaying the rendered image; and

the voxel-control lens has a focal length about equal to the distance between the voxel-control lens and the SLM.

25

41. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in claim 39, wherein:

the object beam unit includes a SLM for displaying the rendered image; and

30 the voxel-control lens has a focal length about equal to the distance between the voxel-control lens and the image of the SLM.

42. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms, comprising:

a light source that produces a coherent beam;

a beam splitter that splits the coherent beam into an object beam and a reference beam;

a material holder holding a holographic recording material having elemental holograms;

an object beam unit, including a removable band-limited diffuser, for displaying a rendered image and for conditioning the object beam with the rendered image to interfere with the reference beam at a chosen elemental hologram;

a voxel-control lens located in the path of the object beam and proximate to the holographic recording material;

a removable masking plate located in the path of the reference beam and proximate to the holographic recording material;

a reference beam-steering system for directing the reference beam to interfere with the object beam at the chosen elemental hologram; and

a computer programmed to control the interference of the object beam and the reference beam and the delivery of the rendered image to the object beam unit.

43. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms, comprising:

a plurality of light sources, each producing a different colored coherent beam;

an optical combiner that combines the plurality of beams into a combined beam;

a beam splitter that splits the combined beam into an object beam and a reference beam;

a material holder holding a holographic recording material capable of recording in color and having elemental holograms;

an object beam unit, for displaying a rendered image and for conditioning the object beam with the rendered image to interfere with the reference beam at a chosen elemental hologram;

a computer programmed to control the interference of the object beam and the reference beam and the delivery of the rendered image to the object beam unit.

44. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in claim 43, said plurality of light sources being at least three in number.

45. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in claim 43, said object beam unit including a full-color SLM and achromatic optics.

46. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms, comprising:

a plurality of light sources, each producing a different colored coherent beam;

a beam splitter that splits each coherent beam into an object beam and a reference beam;

an optical combiner that combines the reference beams into one combined reference beam;

a material holder holding a holographic recording material capable of recording in color and having elemental holograms;

an object beam unit producing a combined object beam that interferes with the combined reference beam;

a computer programmed to control the interference of the combined object beam and the combined reference beam and the delivery of the rendered image to the object beam unit.

47. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in claim 46, said plurality of light sources being at least three in number.

48. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in claim 46, said object beam unit including achromatic optics, a SLM for each object beam, and a optical combiner that combines all the object beams into a combined object beam.

49. An apparatus for printing holographic stereograms as in claim 46, said object beam unit displaying a full-color, rendered image and conditioning each object beams with a rendered image and including a HOE in the path of all the object beams and that converges all the object beams at the chosen elemental hologram.

50. A method of printing a holographic stereogram with elemental holograms, comprising the steps of:
selecting an elemental hologram;
generating a coherent light beam;
splitting the beam into an object beam and a reference beam;
rendering an image;
conditioning the object beam with the rendered image;
selectively steering the reference beam at the selected elemental hologram; and
interfering the conditioned object beam with the reference beam at the selected elemental hologram.

51. The method of claim 50, further comprising the steps of:
shielding the holographic recording material from the object beam;
shielding the holographic recording material from the reference beam; and
translating the holographic material relative to the object beam to select another elemental hologram.

52. The method of claim 50, the step of conditioning the object beam comprising the step of interacting the object beam with a SLM.

53. The method of claim 50, the step of conditioning the object beam comprising the step of interacting the object beam with a band-limited diffuser.

54. The method of claim 50, the step of conditioning the object beam comprising the step of interacting the object beam with a HOE.

55. The method of claim 54, the step of interacting the object beam with a HOE comprising the steps of converging the object beam and evenly distributing the object beam towards the selected elemental hologram.

56. The method of claim 50, the step of conditioning the object beam comprising the step of passing the object beam through a voxel-control lens.

57. A method of printing a holographic stereogram with elemental holograms, comprising the steps of:

- selecting an elemental hologram;
- generating a coherent light beam;
- splitting the beam into an object beam and a reference beam;
- rendering an image;
- conditioning the object beam with the rendered image, the conditioning of the object beam including the step of passing the object beam though a voxel-control lens;
- interfering the conditioned object beam with the reference beam at the selected elemental hologram.

58. A method of generating an animated holographic stereogram with elemental holograms, comprising the steps of:

- selecting viewing zones;
- for each viewing zone, selecting a scene viewable from the viewing zone;
- generating computer models of each scene; and
- for each elemental hologram:
- determining viewing zone mask volumes;
- rendering an image of the scene enclosed by each of the viewing zone mask volumes; and
- after rendering is complete for each viewing zone mask volume of an elemental hologram, compositing the rendered images for that elemental hologram.

59. A method of printing an animated holographic stereogram with elemental holograms, comprising the steps of:

- selecting an elemental hologram;
- generating a coherent light beam;
- splitting the beam into an object beam and a reference beam;
- determining viewing zone mask volumes for each elemental hologram;
- rendering images for each viewing zone mask volume of each elemental hologram;
- compositing the rendered images of the viewing zone mask volume of an elemental hologram into a composite image;
- conditioning the object beam with the composite image;
- selectively steering the reference beam at the selected elemental hologram; and
- interfering the conditioned object beam with the reference beam at the selected elemental hologram.

60. The method of claim 59, further comprising the steps of:

- shielding the holographic recording material from the object beam;
- shielding the holographic recording material from the reference beam; and
- translating the holographic material relative to the object beam to select another elemental hologram.

61. A method of printing a holographic stereogram with elemental holograms, comprising the steps of:

selecting an elemental hologram;
generating a plurality of coherent light beams;
combining the light beams into one combined beam;
splitting the combined beam into an object beam and a reference beam; rendering a full-color image;
conditioning the object beam with the rendered image;
and

interfering the conditioned object beam with the reference beam at the selected elemental hologram.

62. A method of printing a holographic stereogram with elemental holograms, comprising the steps of:
selecting an elemental hologram;
generating a plurality of coherent light beams;
splitting the each coherent light beam into an object beam and a reference beam;
rendering a plurality of images;
conditioning each object beam with one rendered image;
combining all the conditioned object beams into one combined object beam;
combining all the reference beams into one combined reference beam; and
interfering the combined object beam with the combined reference beam at the selected elemental hologram.

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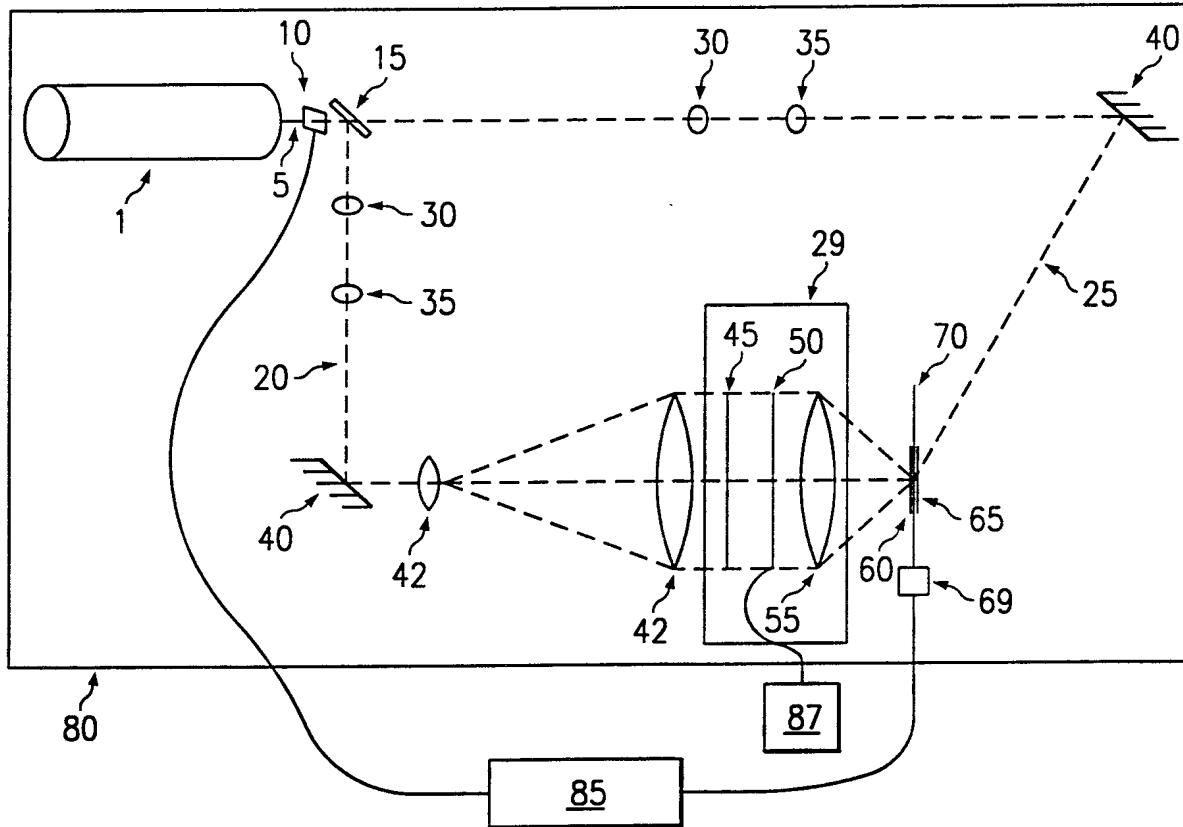


FIG. 1a
(PRIOR ART)

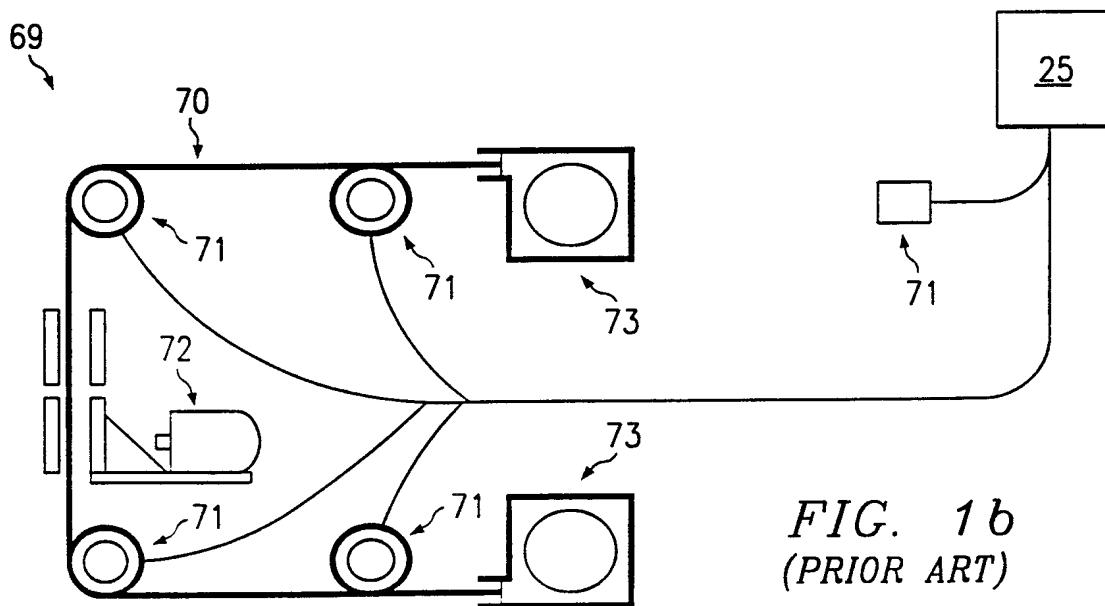


FIG. 1b
(PRIOR ART)

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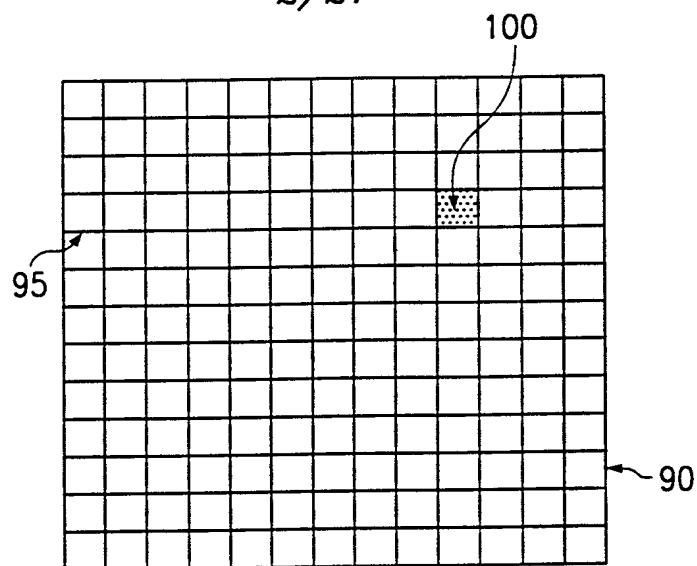


FIG. 2a
(PRIOR ART)

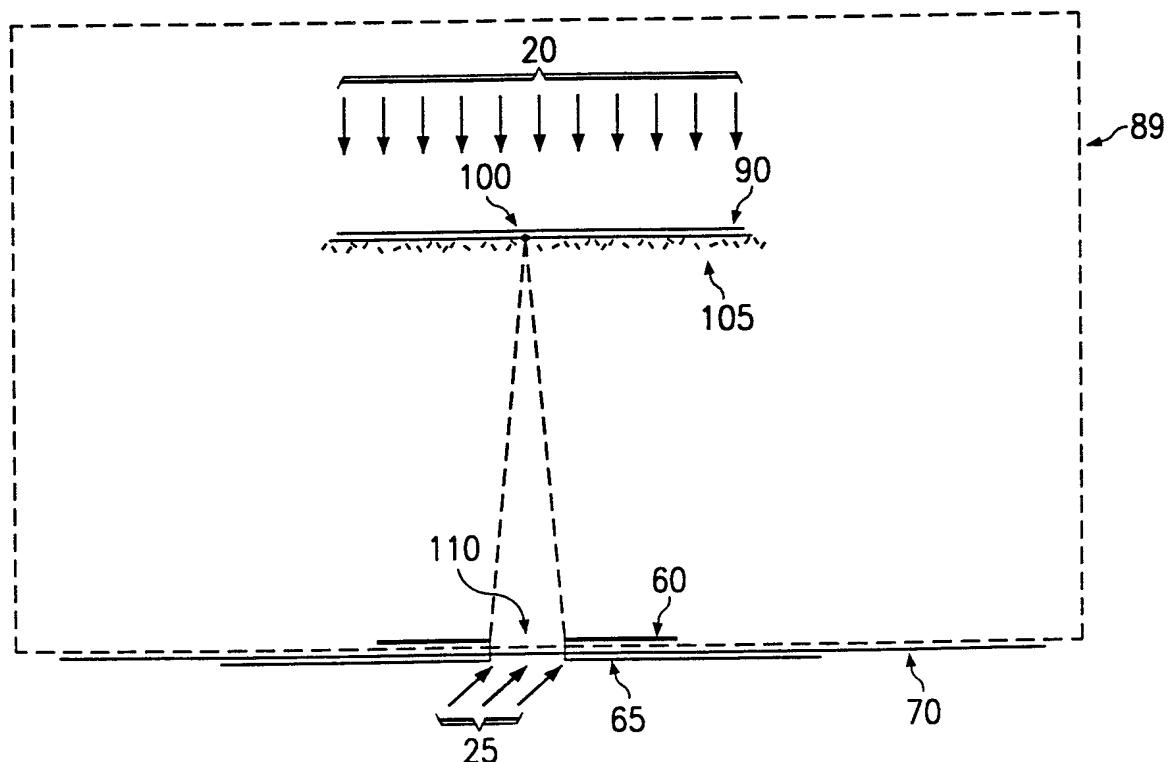
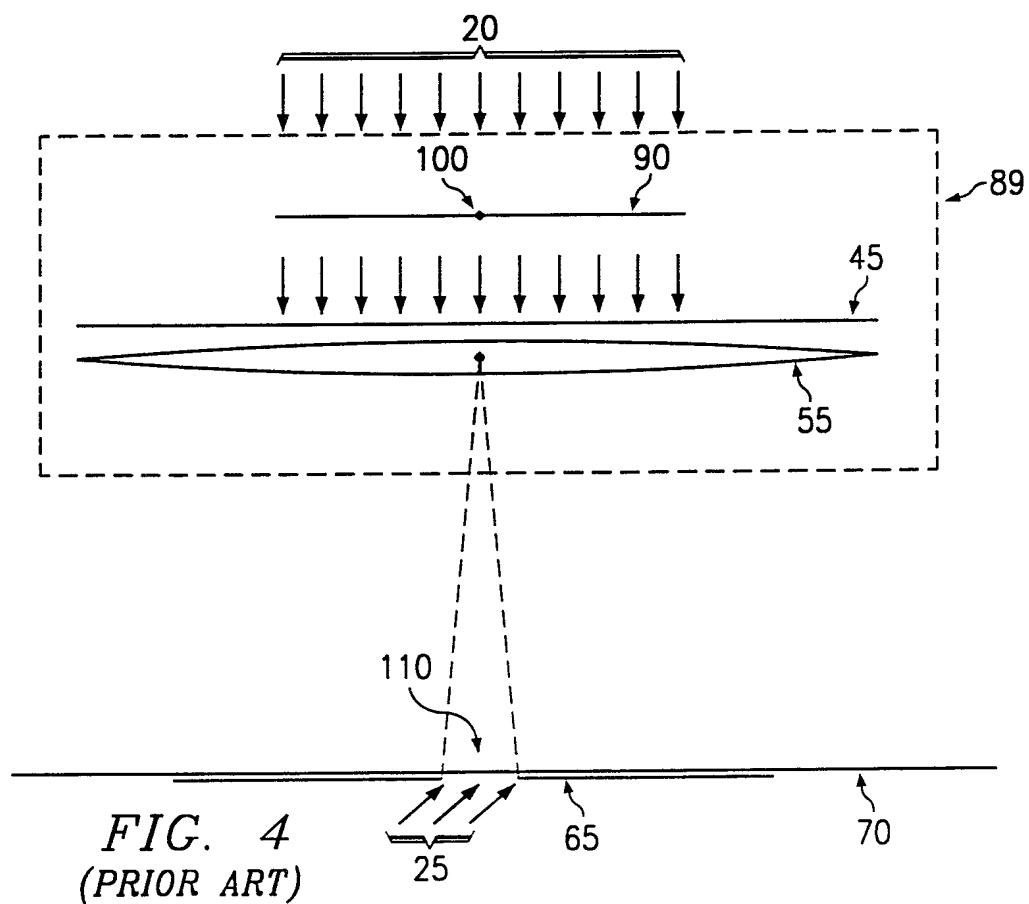
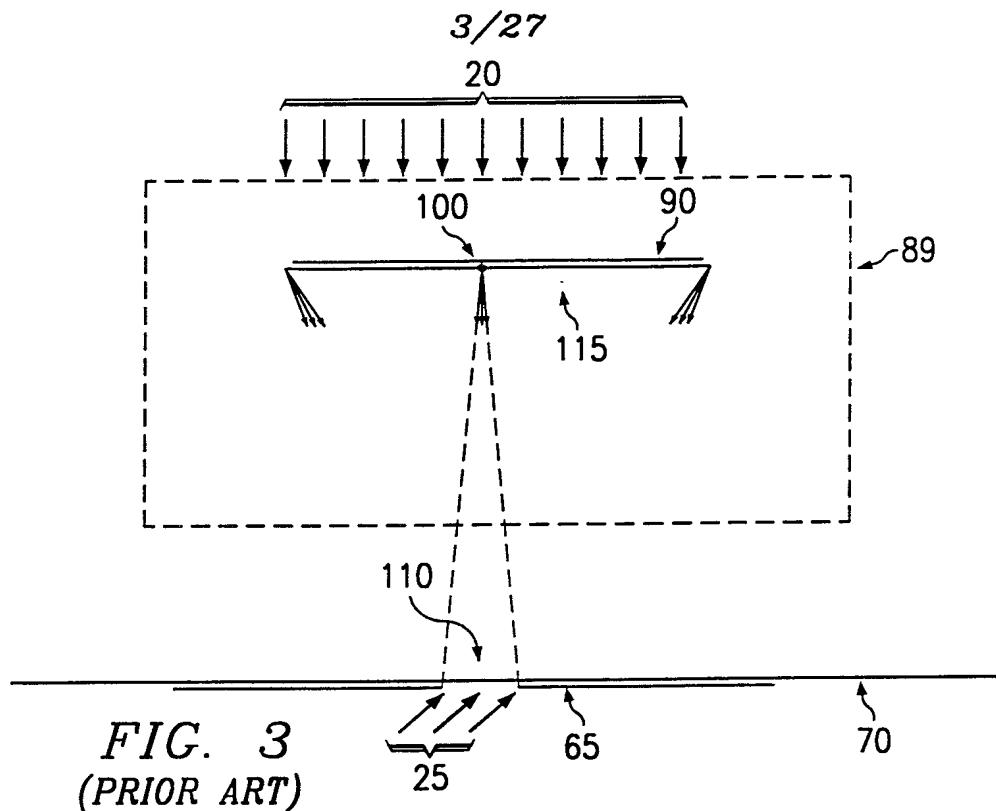


FIG. 2b
(PRIOR ART)



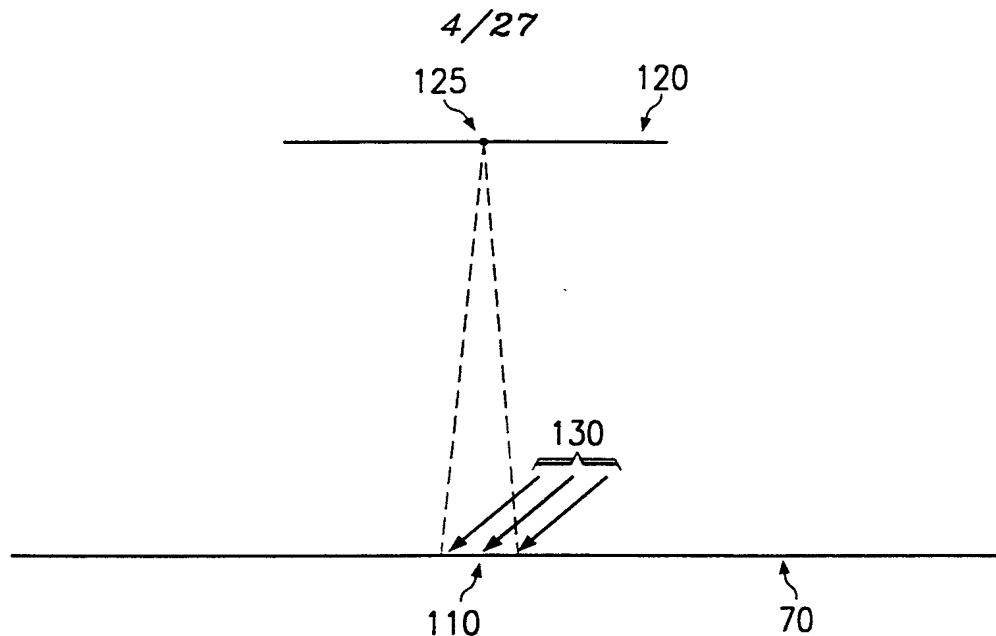


FIG. 5
(PRIOR ART)

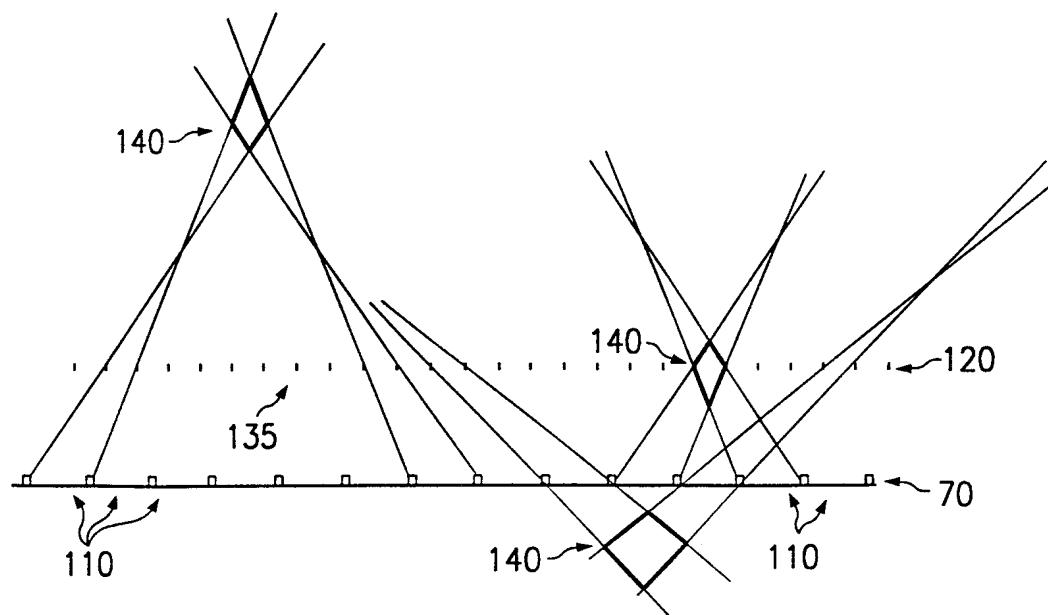


FIG. 6
(PRIOR ART)

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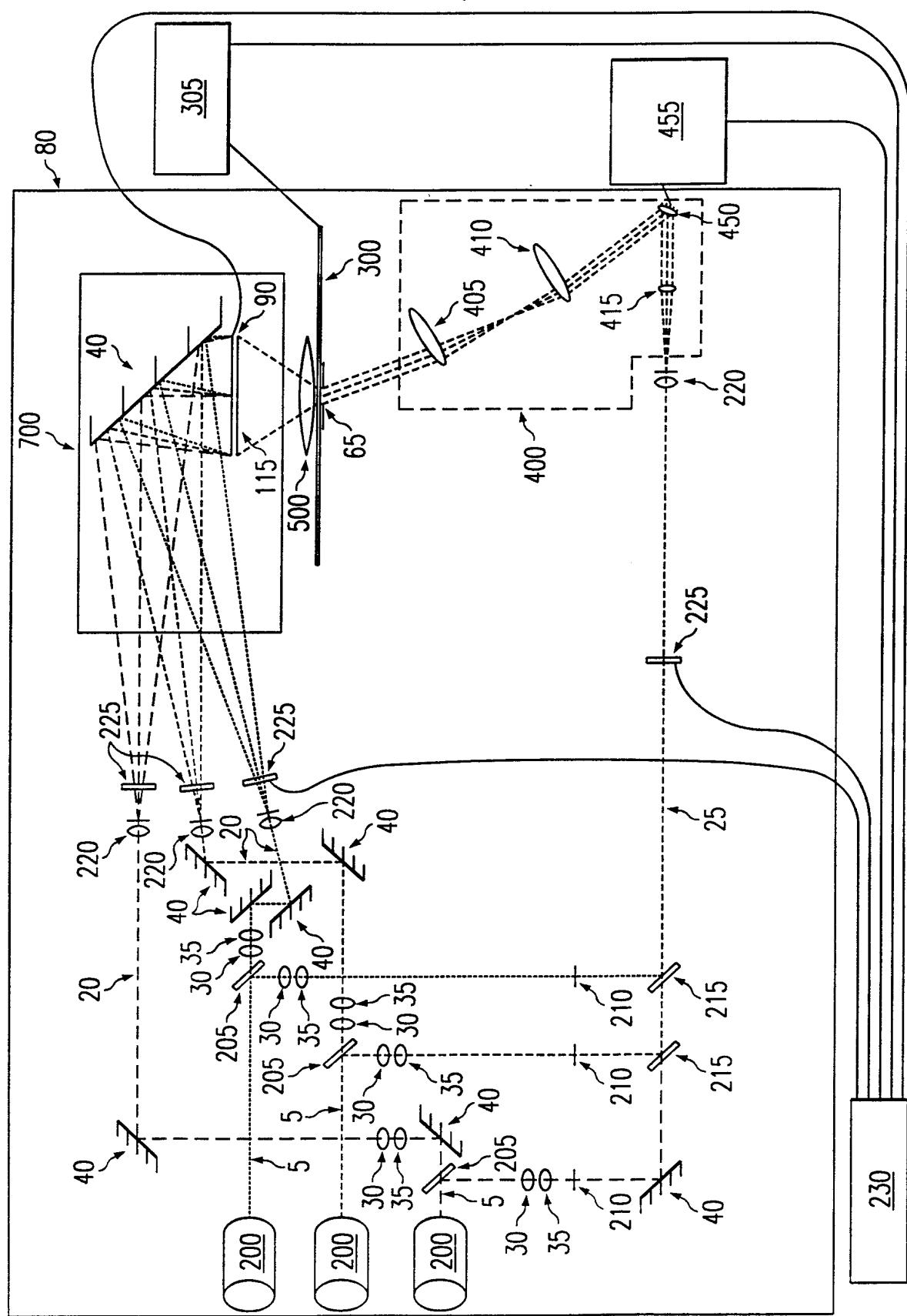


FIG. 7

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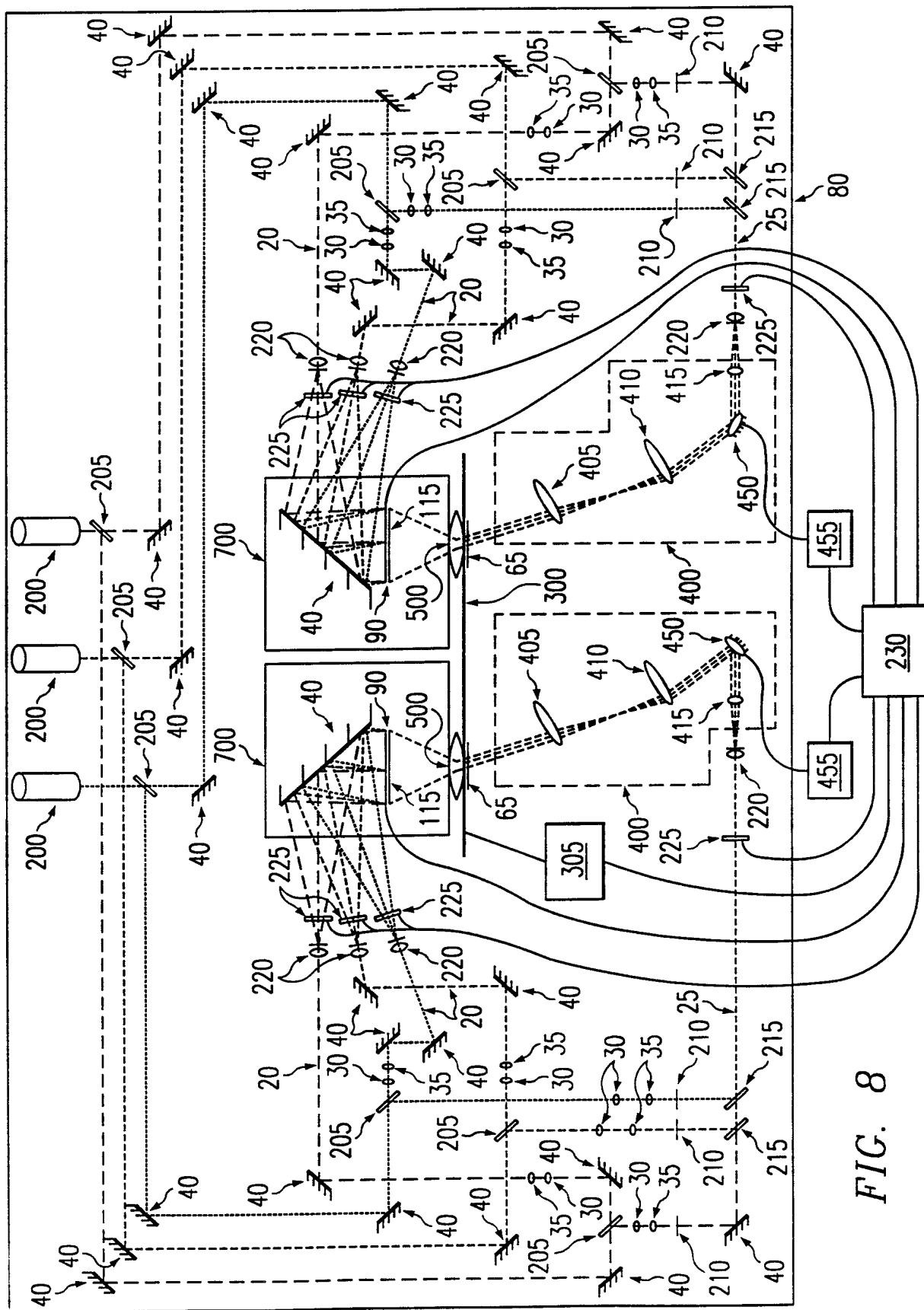
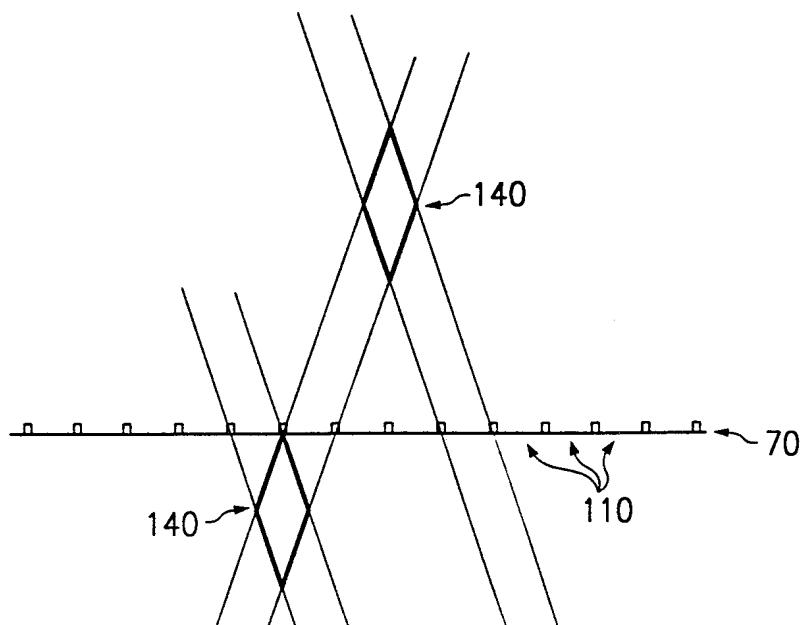
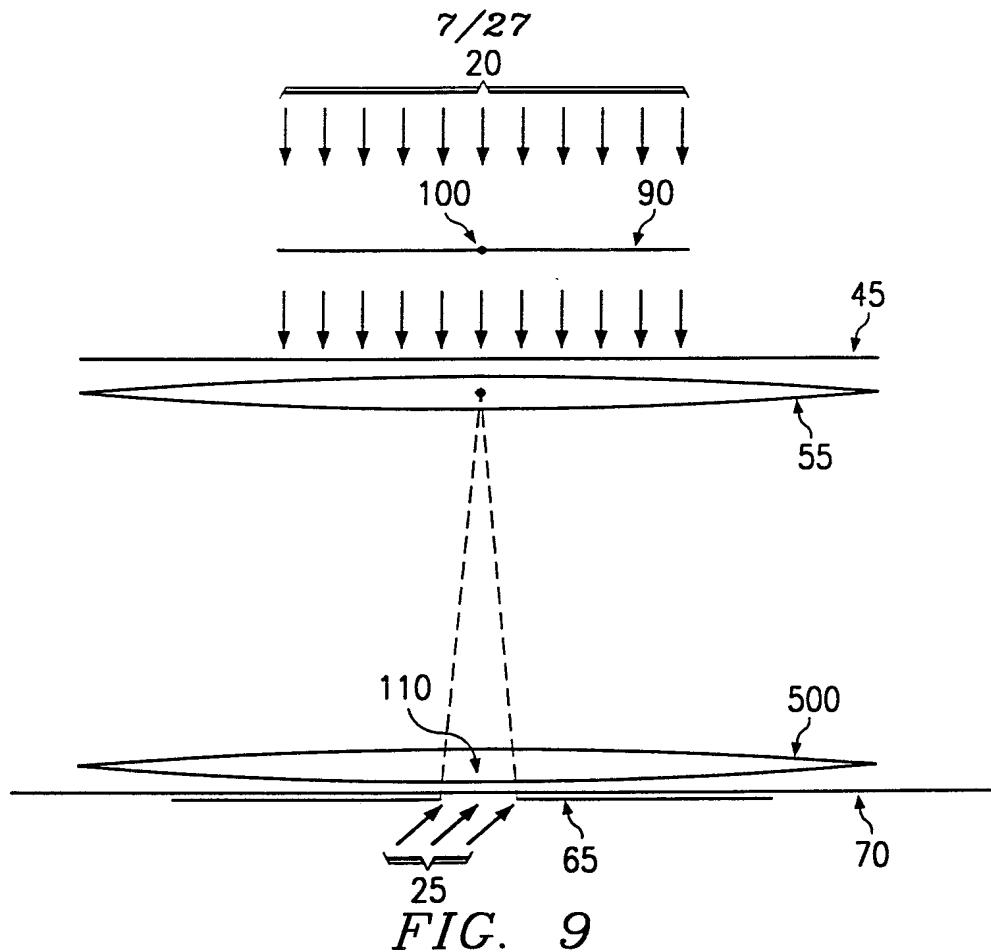


FIG. 8



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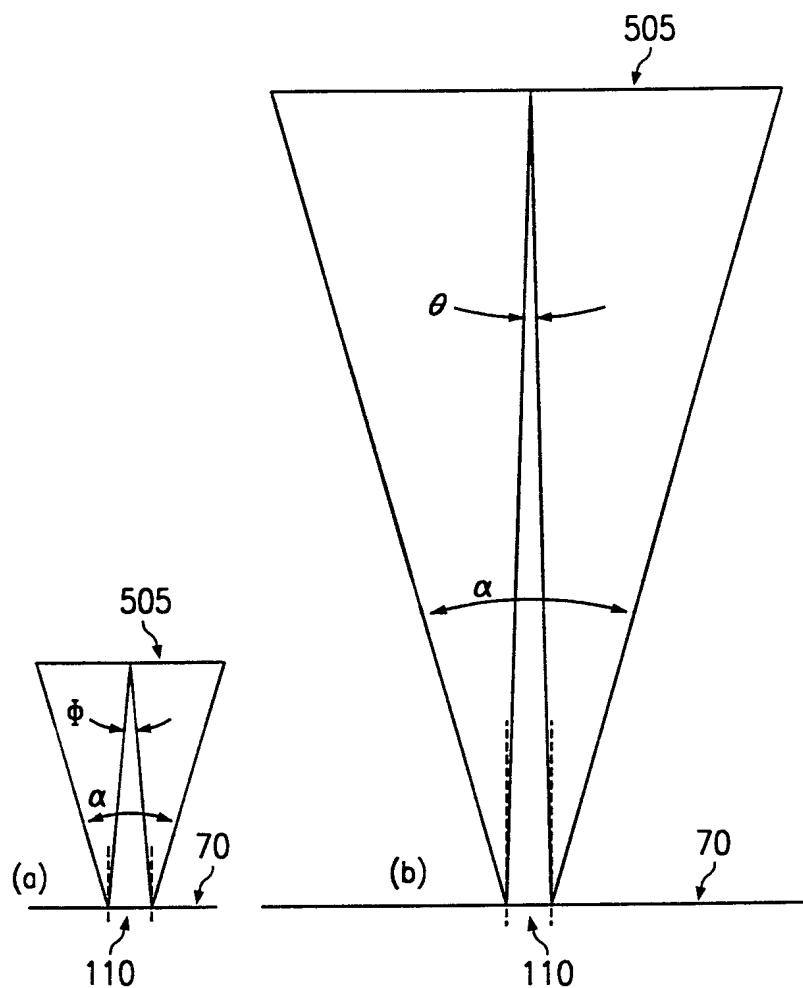


FIG. 10

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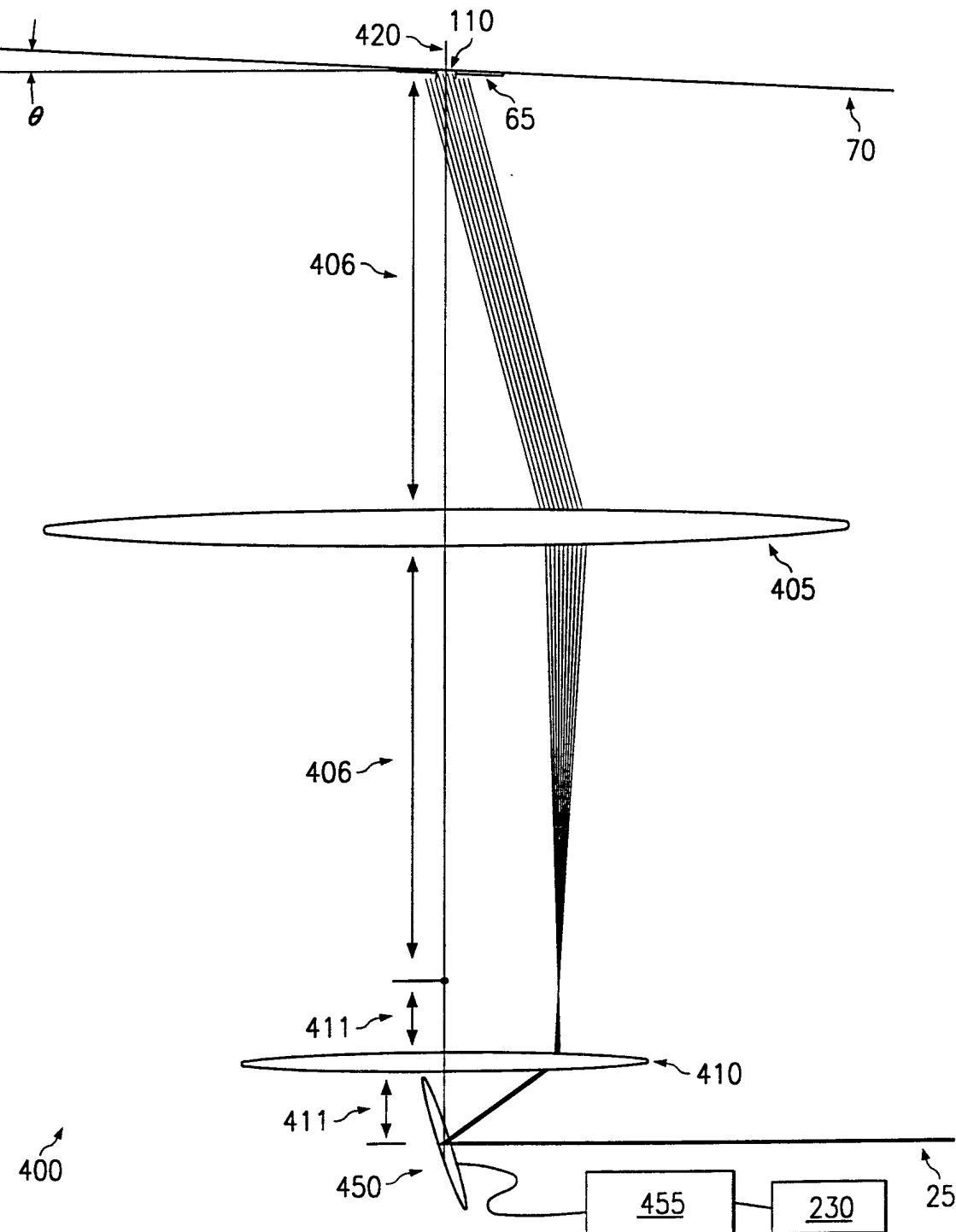


FIG. 12

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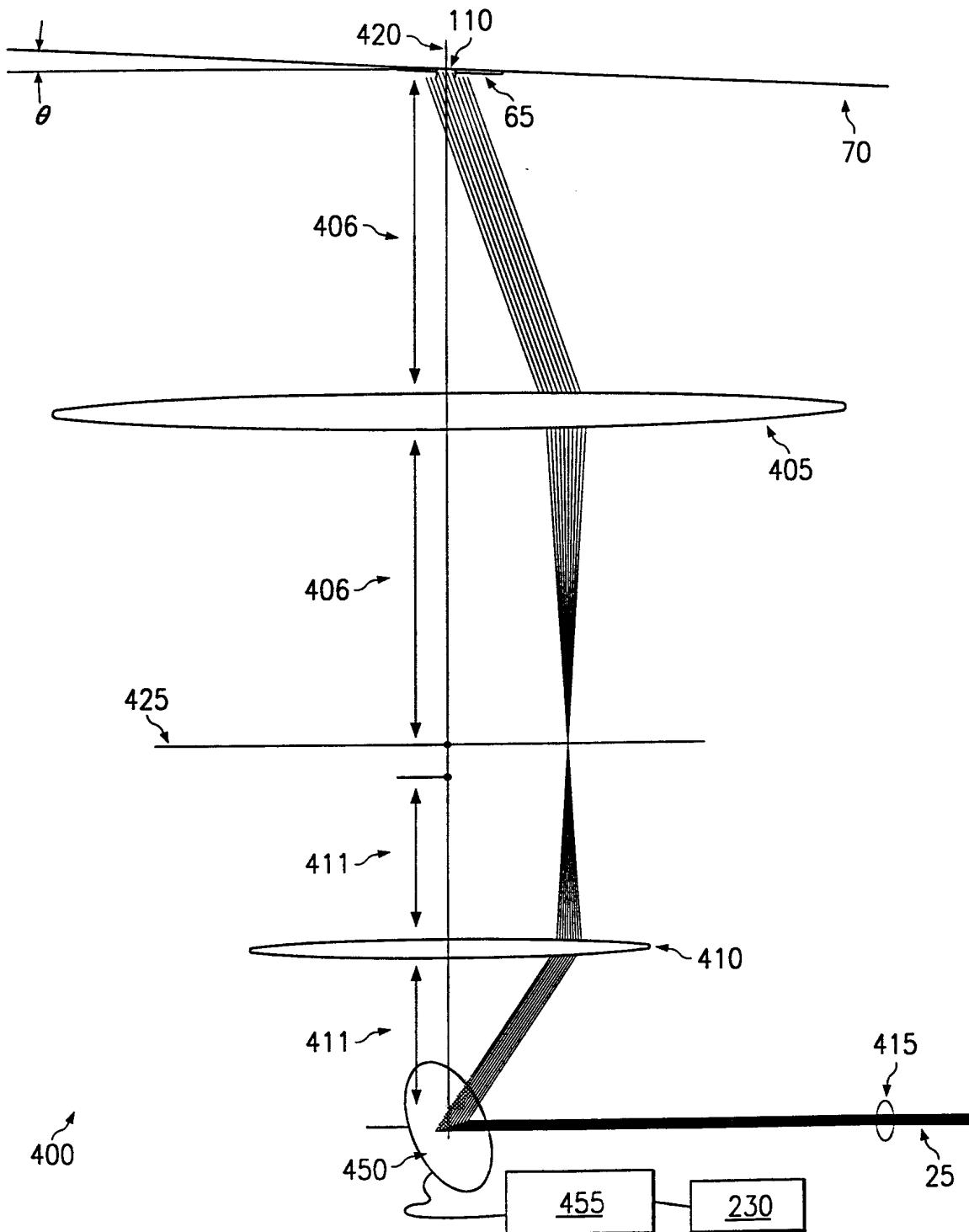


FIG. 13

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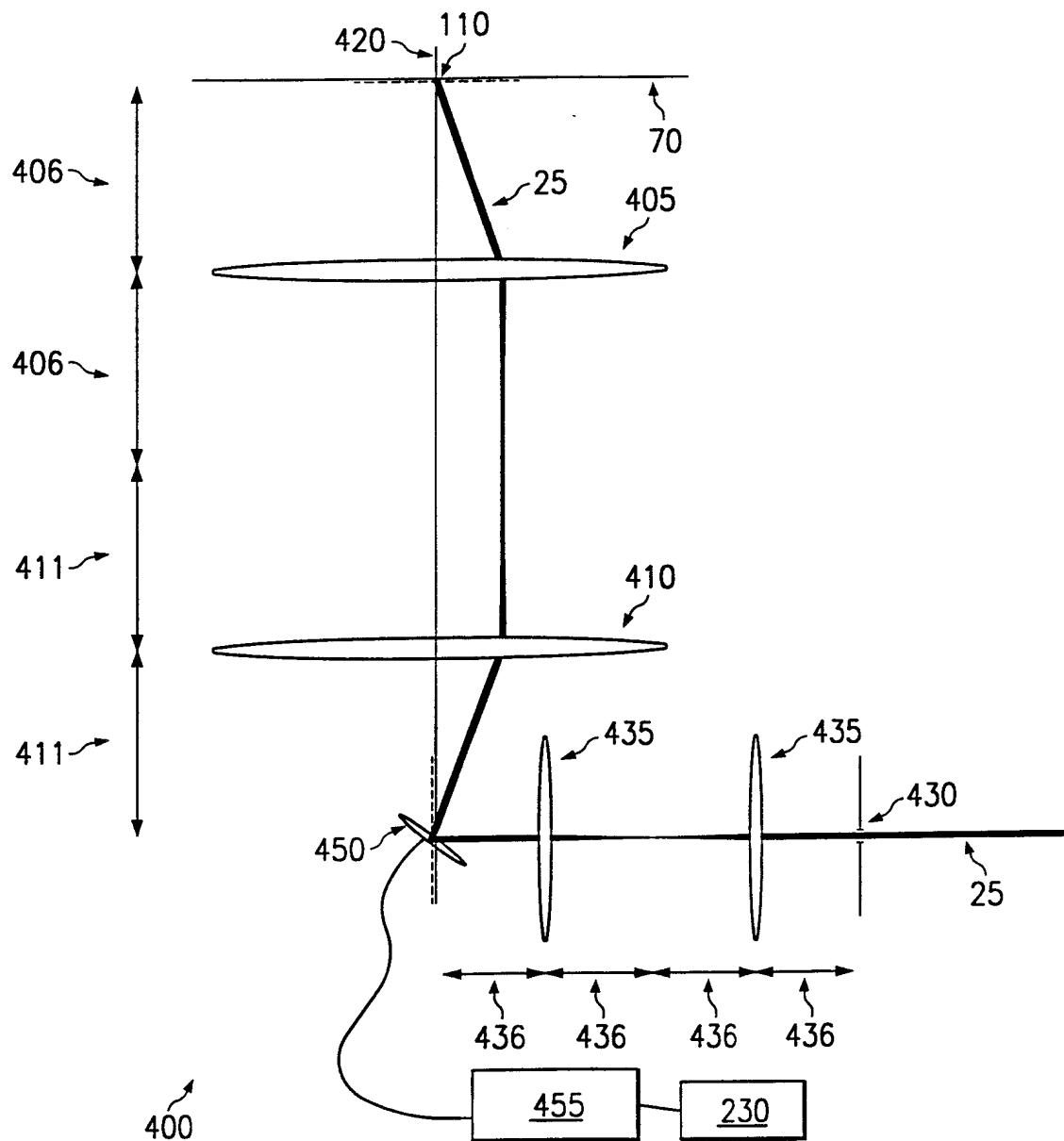
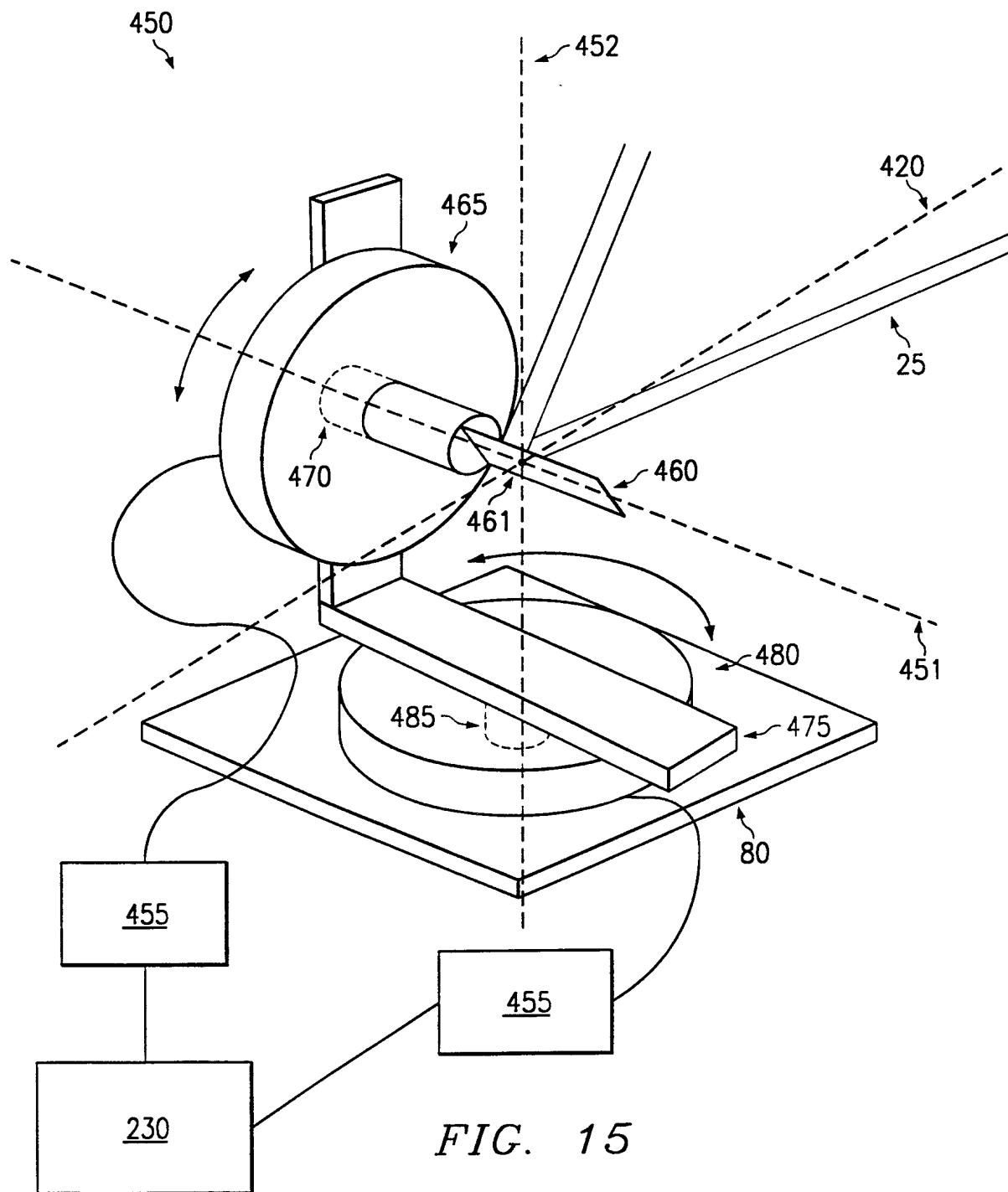


FIG. 14

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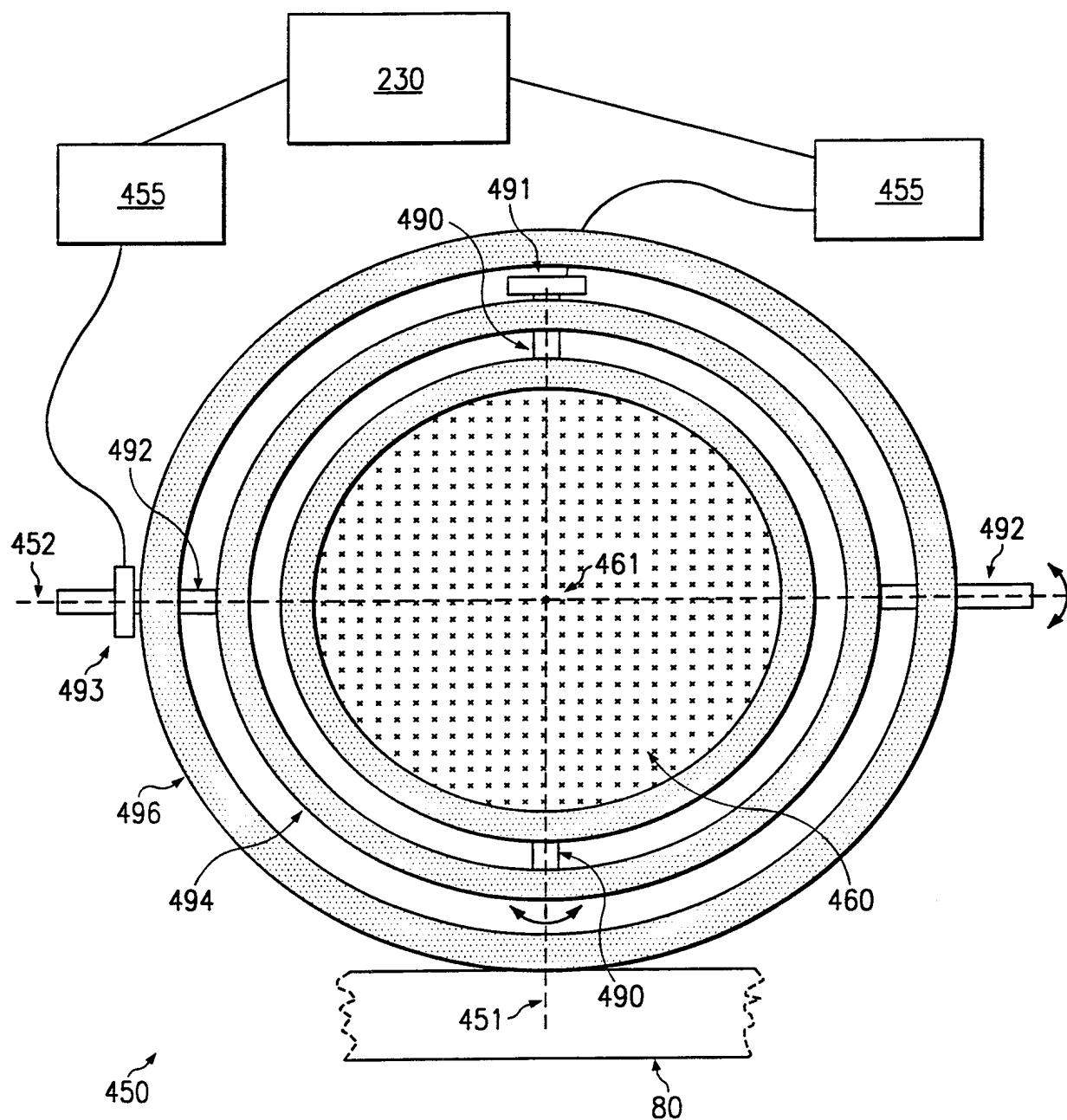


FIG. 16

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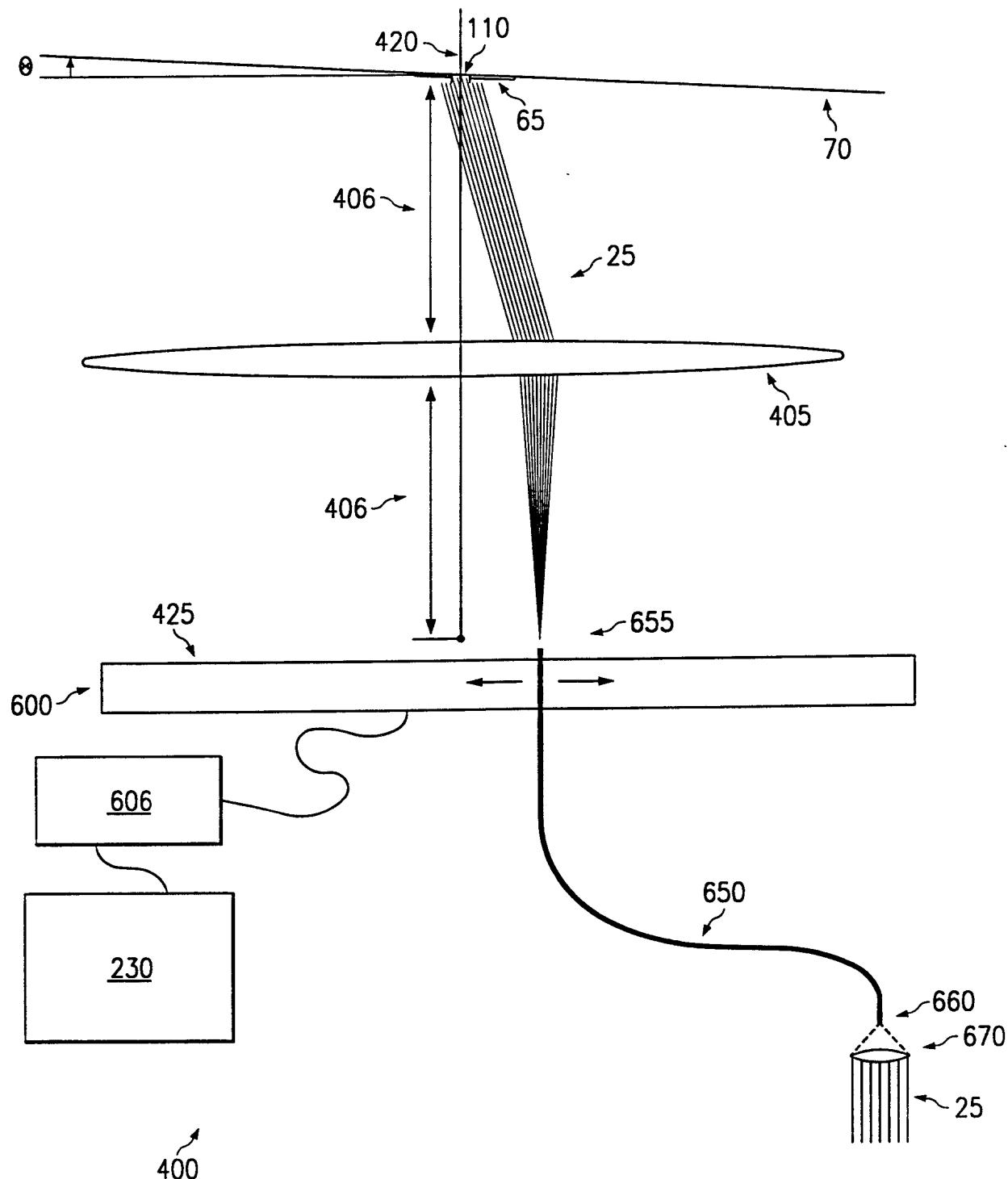


FIG. 17

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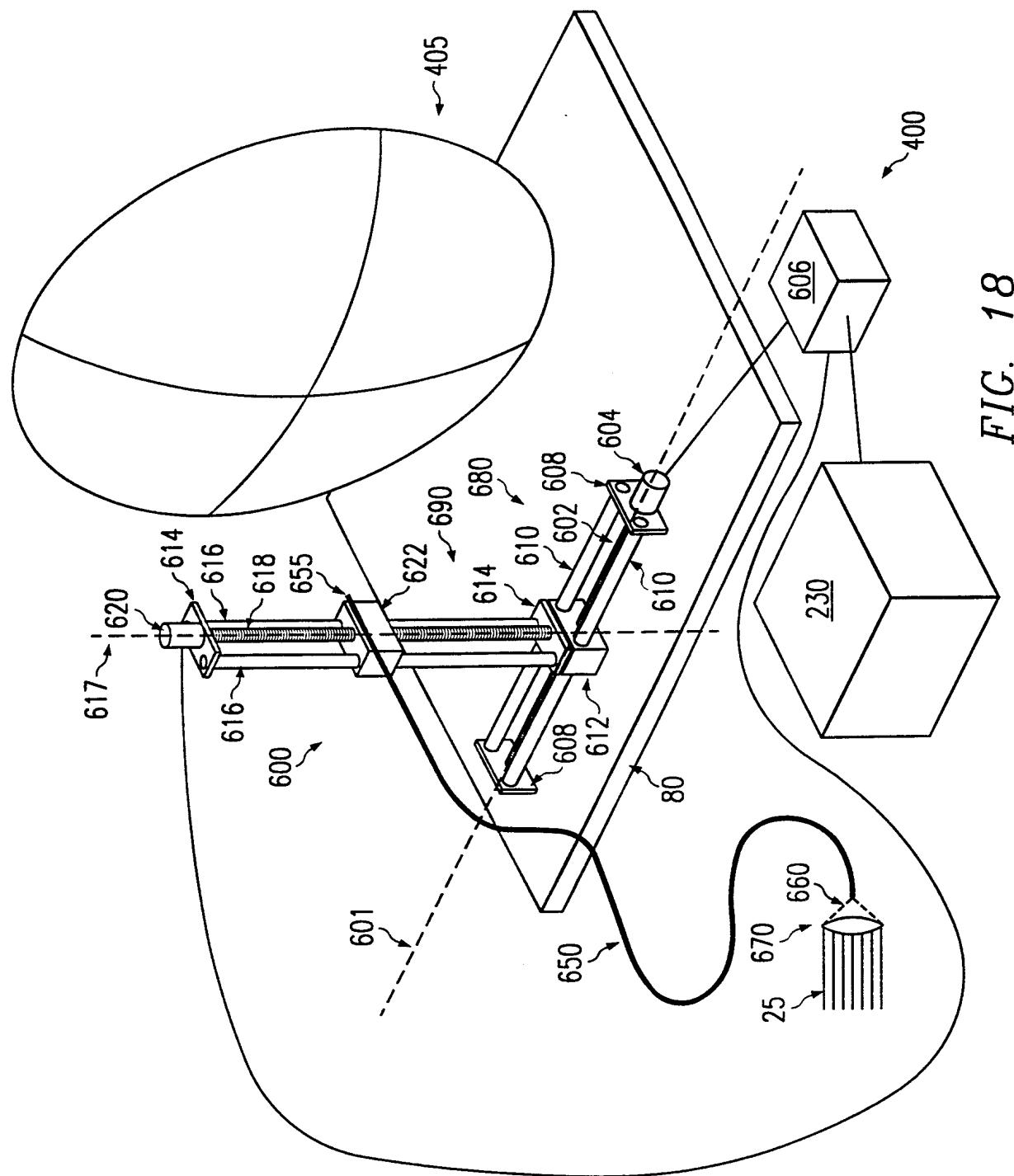
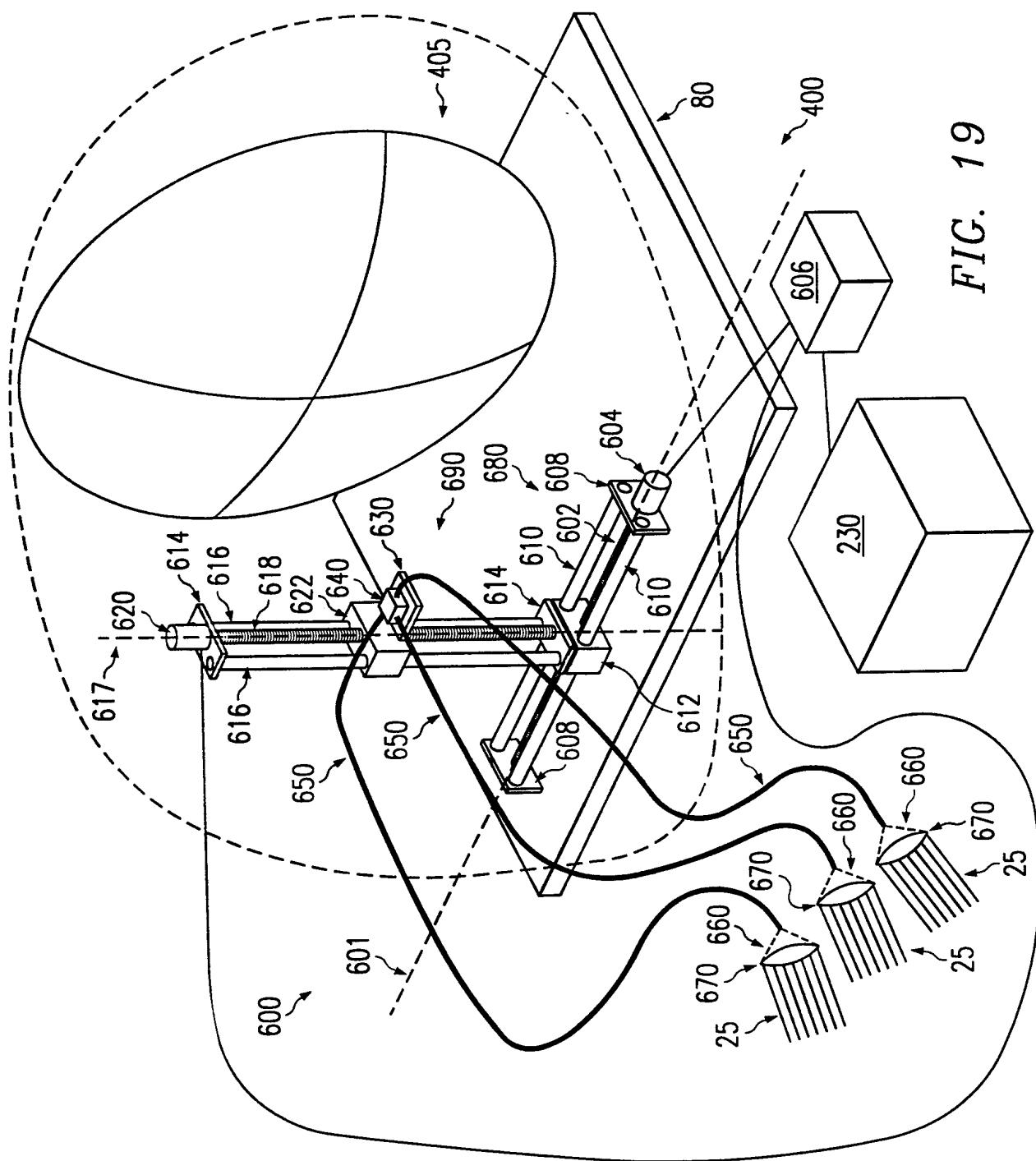


FIG. 18

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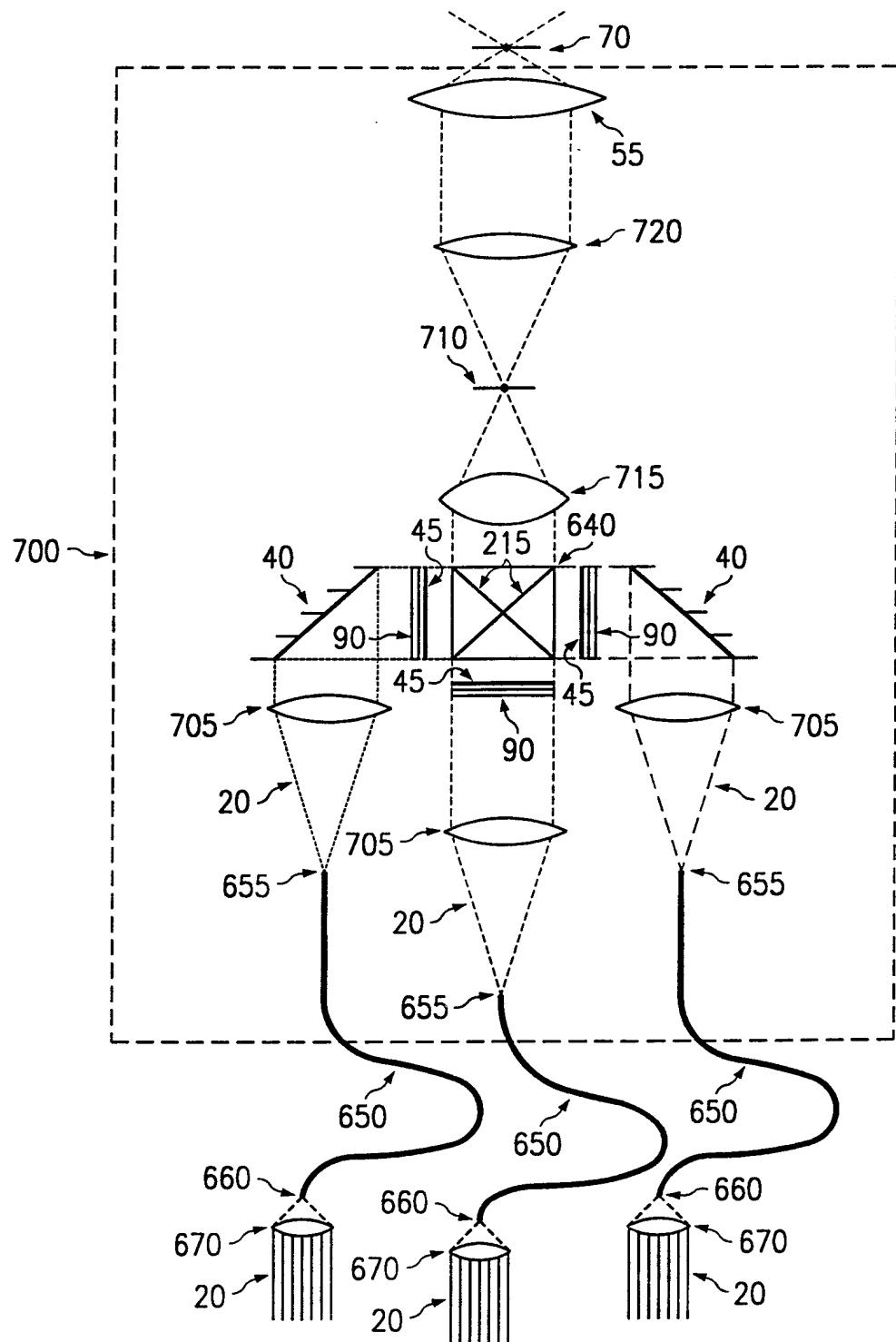


FIG. 20

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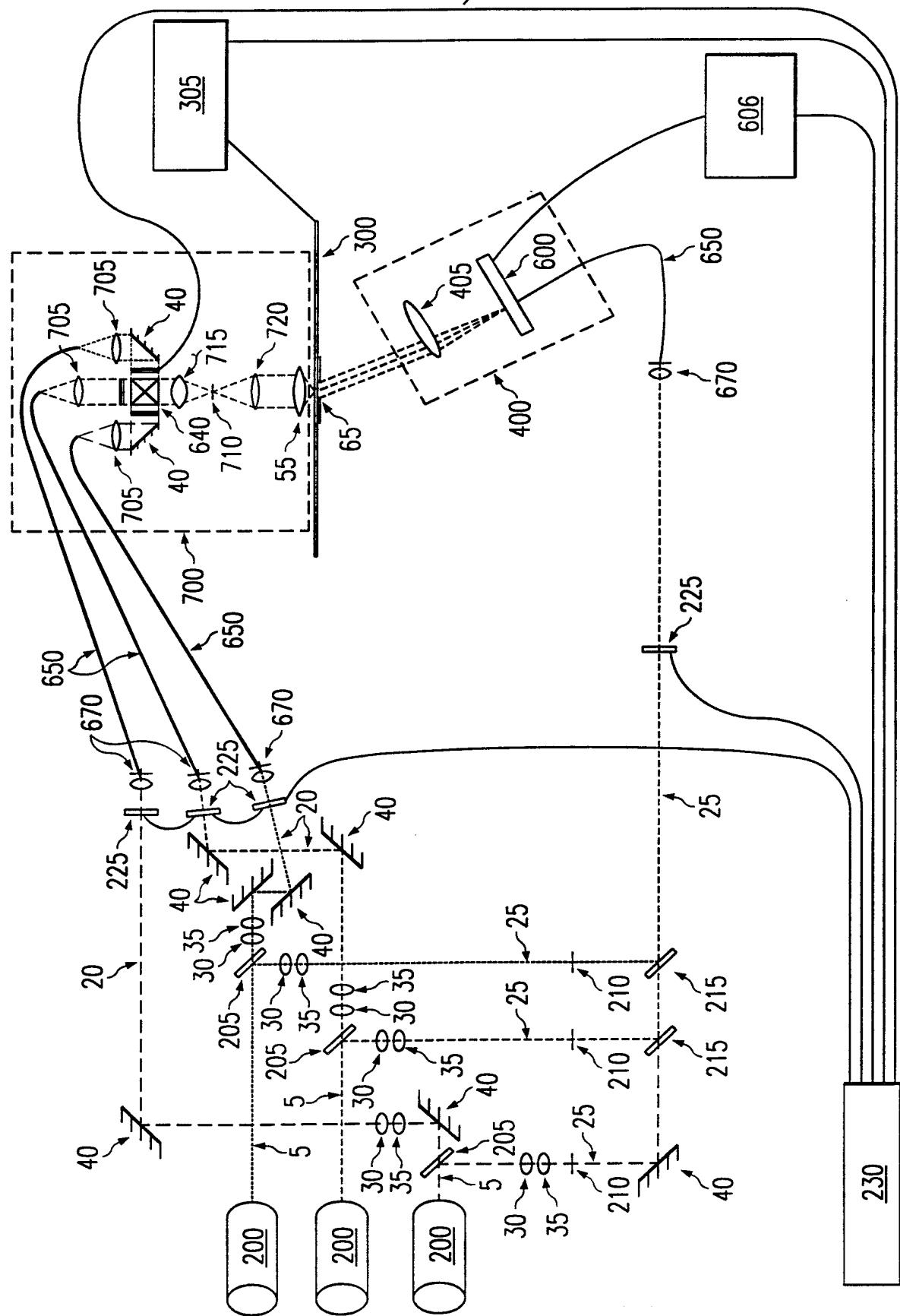


FIG. 21

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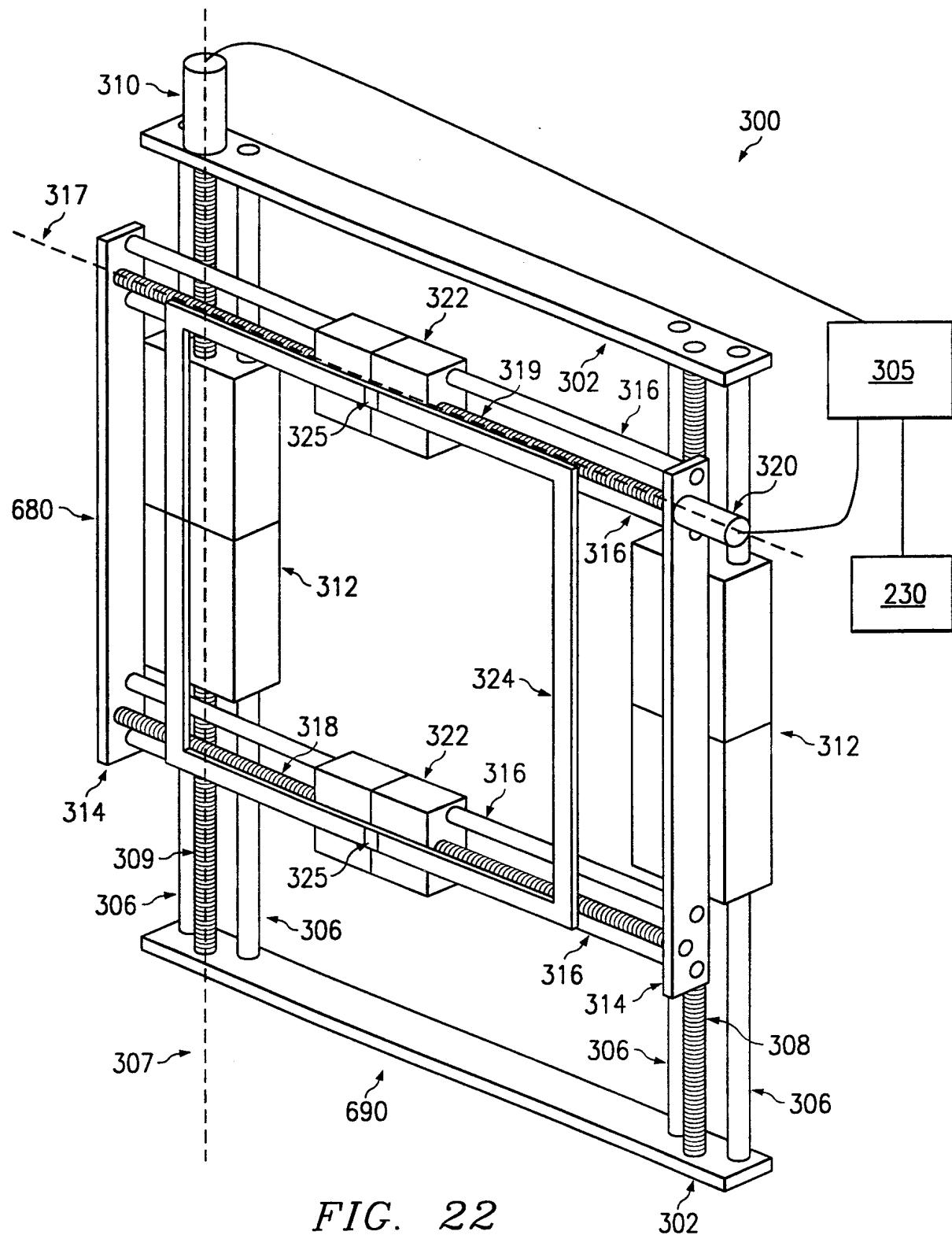


FIG. 22

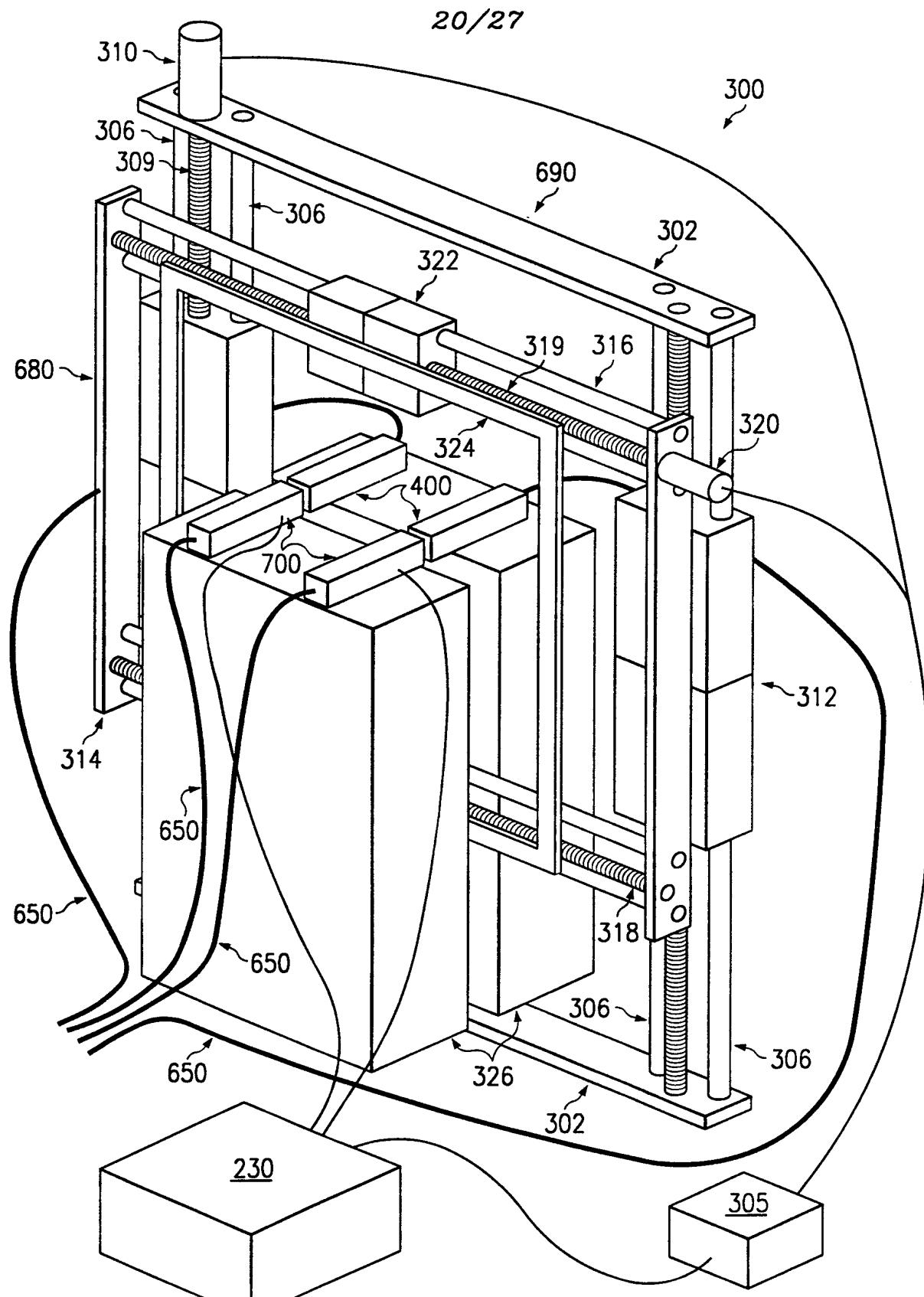


FIG. 23

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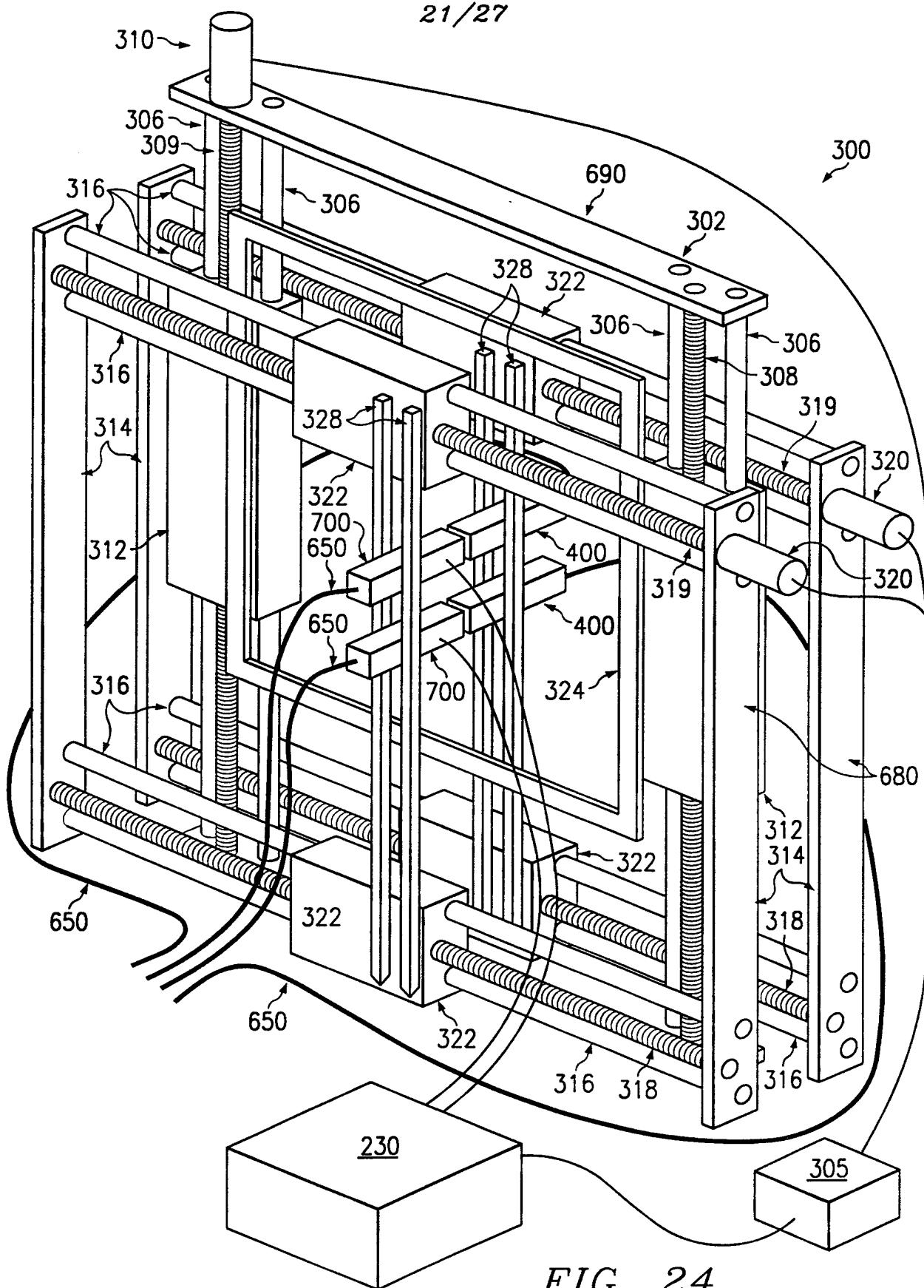


FIG. 24

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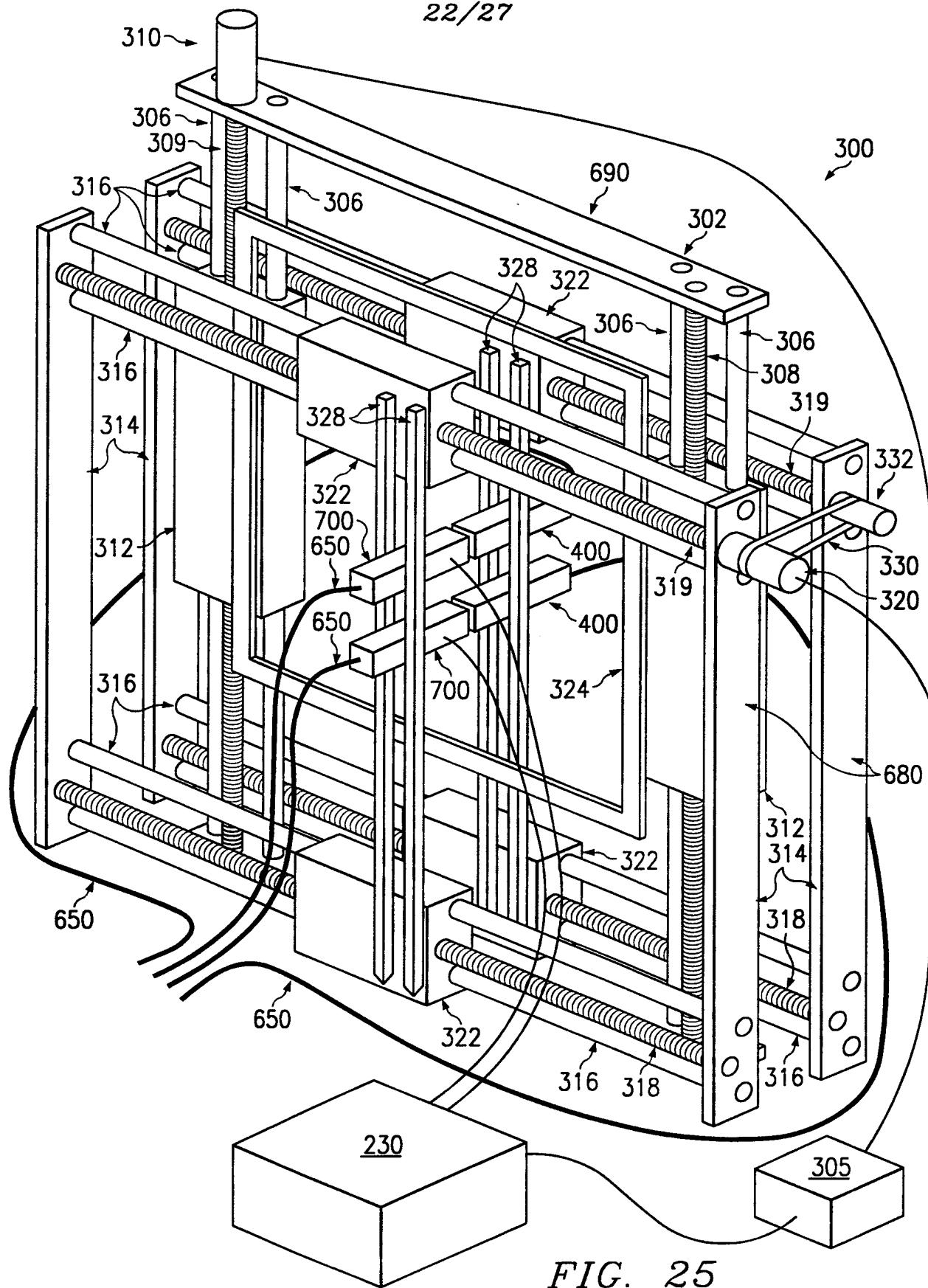


FIG. 25

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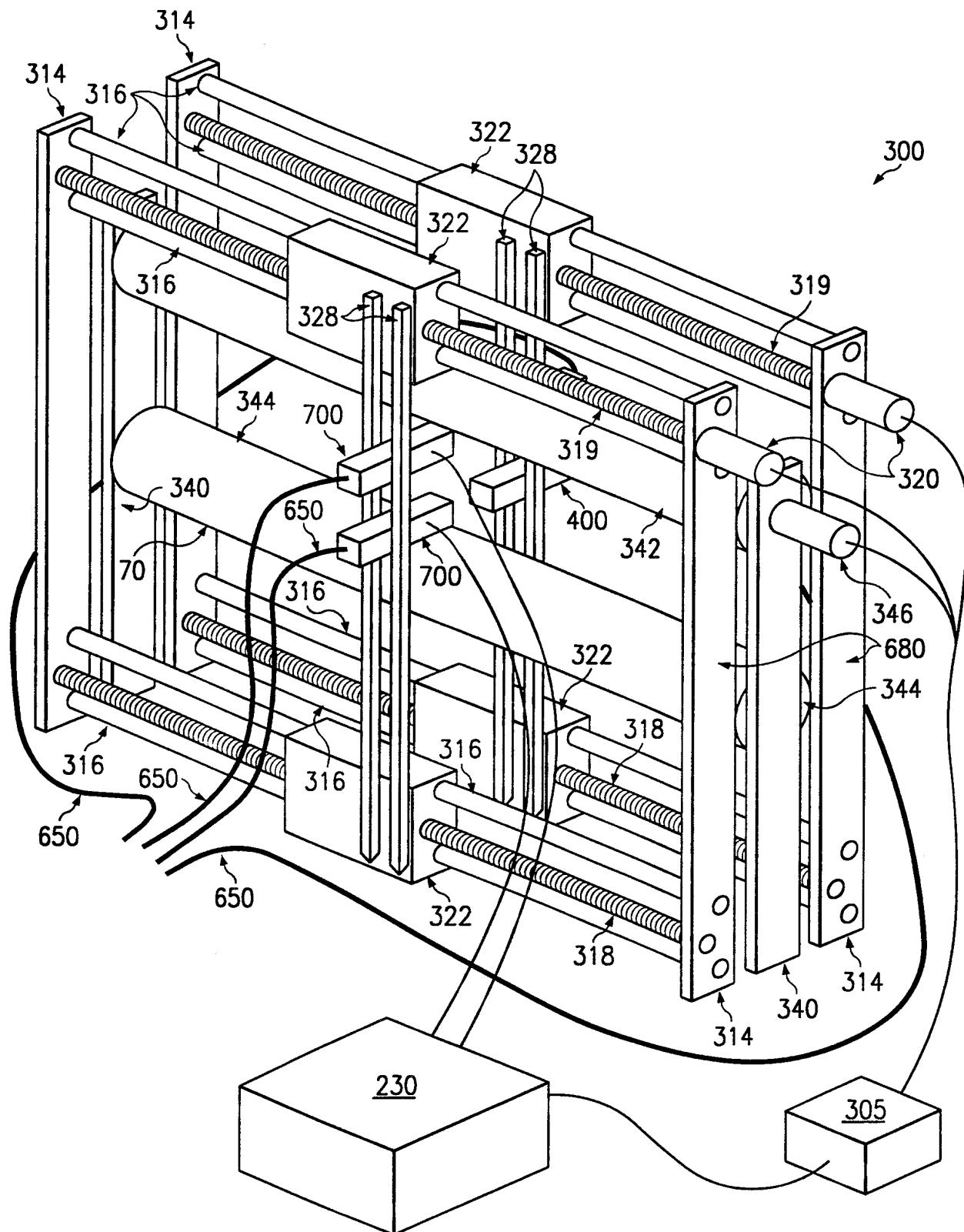


FIG. 26

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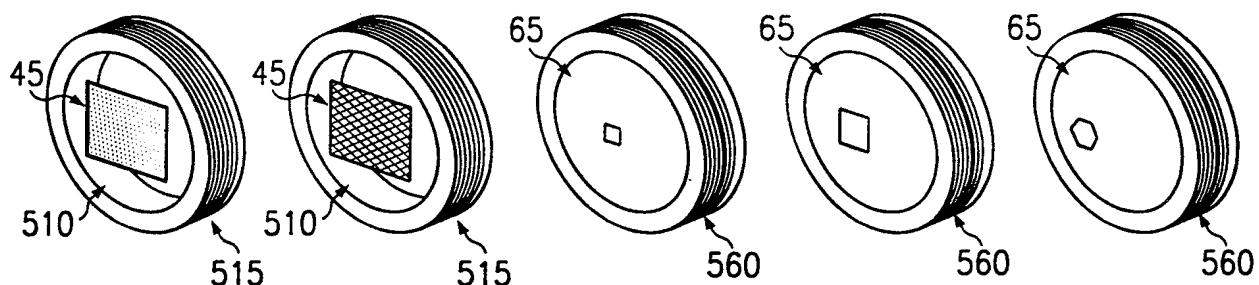


FIG. 27a

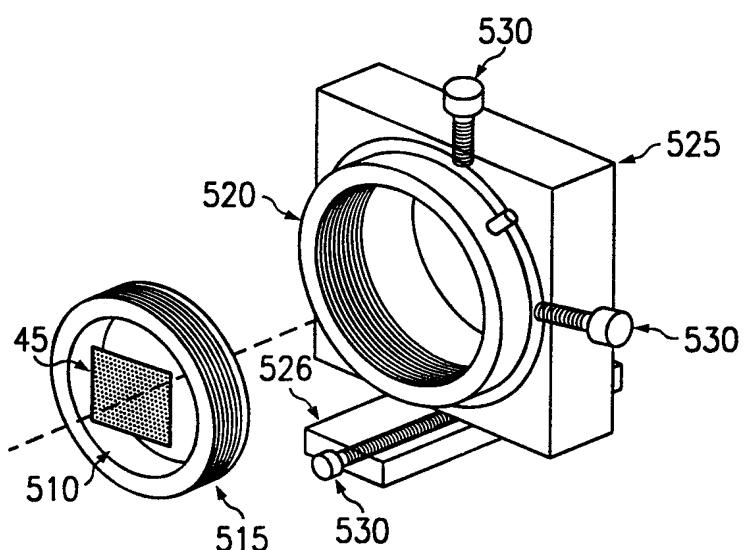


FIG. 27b

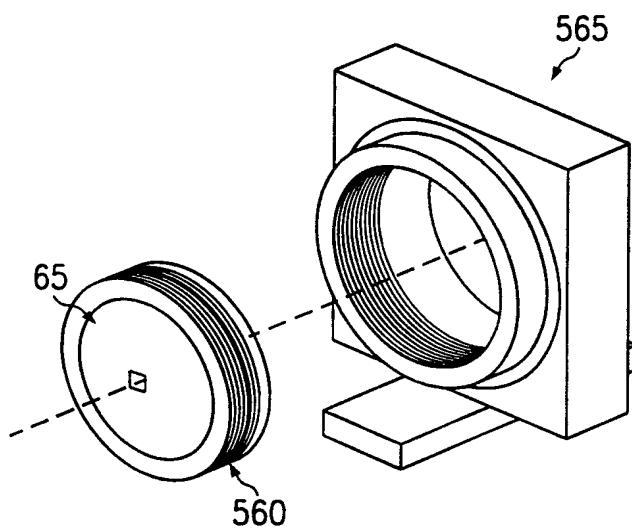


FIG. 27c

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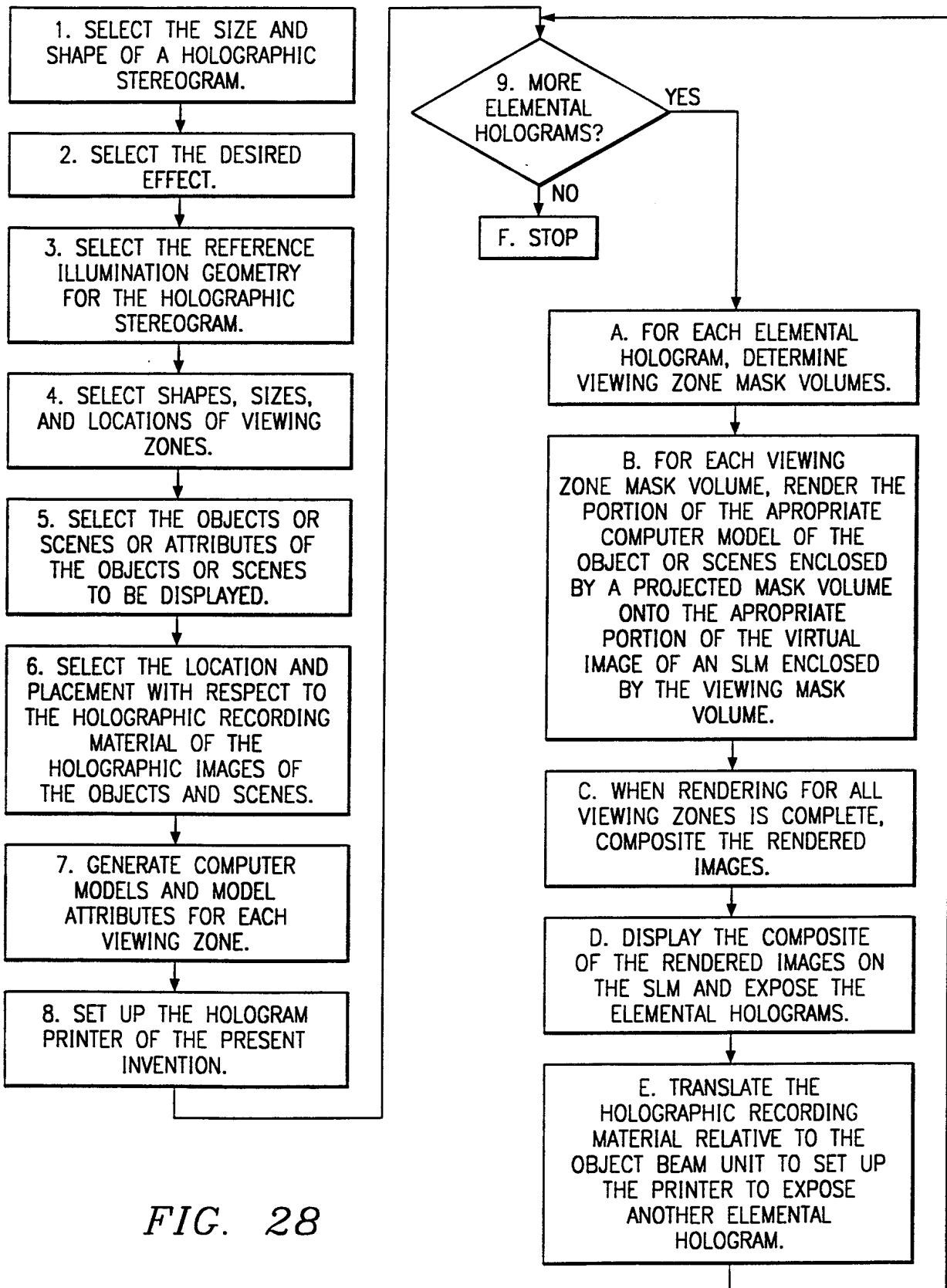


FIG. 28

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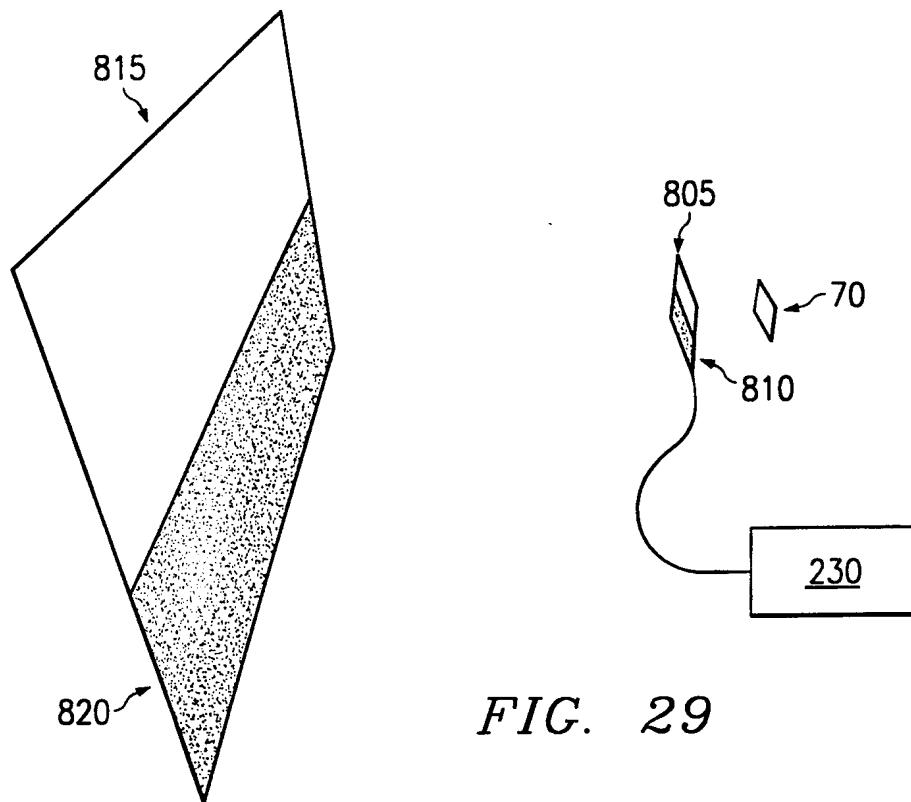


FIG. 29

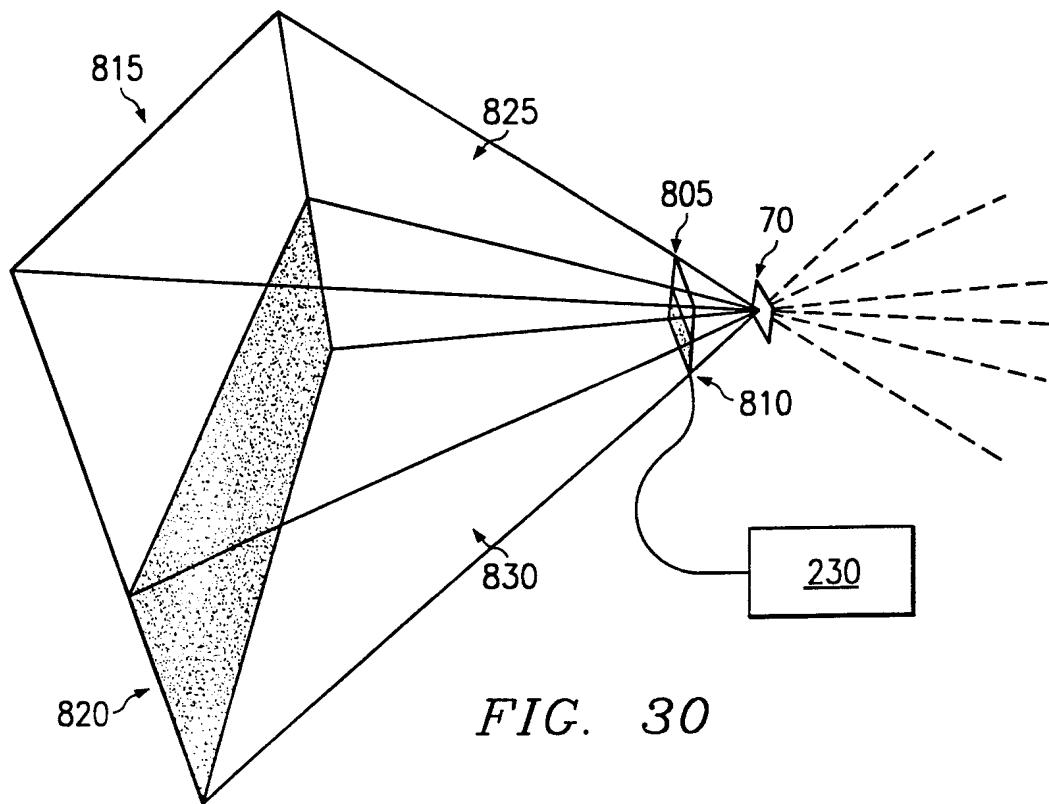
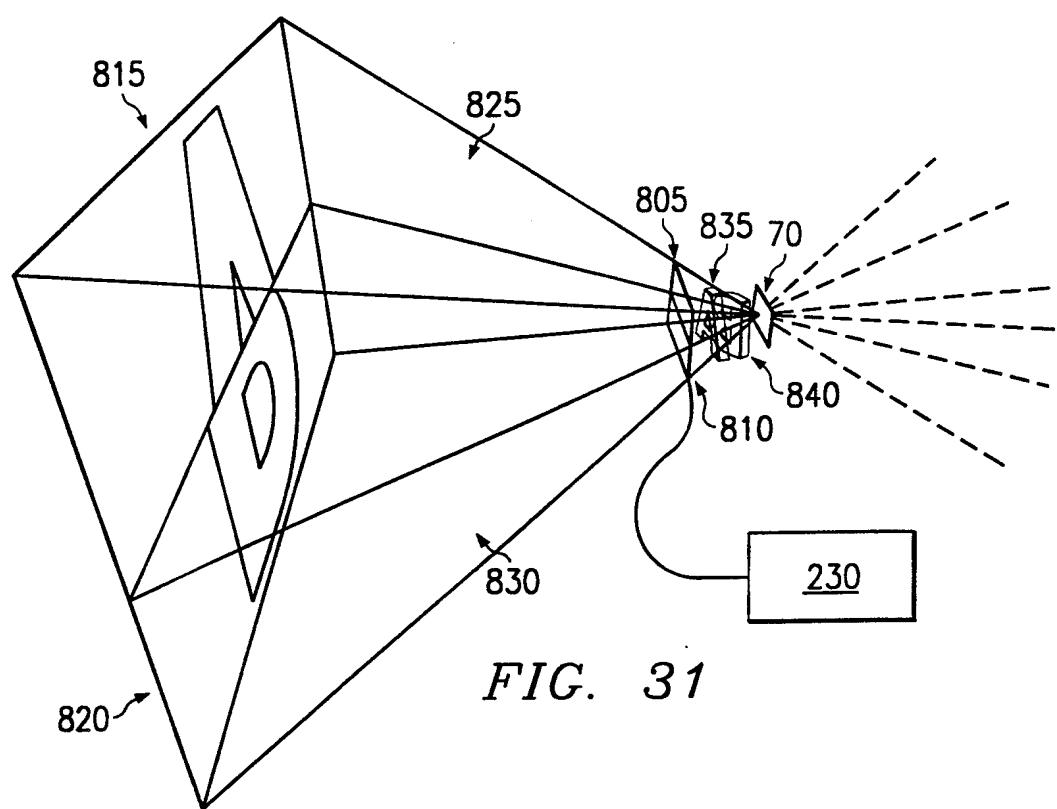


FIG. 30

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/US 99/13919

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 G03H1/26

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 G03H

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 138 471 A (MCGREW STEPHEN P) 11 August 1992 (1992-08-11) column 5, line 60 -column 6, line 34 figure 5	1, 3, 6, 33, 34, 50, 52
Y	---	4, 5, 7, 12, 13, 21-24
X	US 4 067 638 A (YANO AKIO ET AL) 10 January 1978 (1978-01-10) column 2, line 31 - line 61 figure 1	61
Y	---	4, 5, 7 -/-

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

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"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
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"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

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Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
20 October 1999	27/10/1999
Name and mailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer Krametz, E

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/US 99/13919

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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Y	GB 2 214 651 A (STC PLC) 6 September 1989 (1989-09-06) page 8, paragraph 2 - paragraph 3 figure 2 ----	12, 13
Y	US 4 715 694 A (EITEL FREDERICK G) 29 December 1987 (1987-12-29) column 1, line 57 - line 68 ----	21-24
A	US 3 658 402 A (NISHIDA NOBUO ET AL) 25 April 1972 (1972-04-25) column 2, line 10 - line 50 figure 1 ----	28
A	US 5 191 449 A (NEWSWANGER CRAIG) 2 March 1993 (1993-03-02) column 1, line 34 - line 50 -----	58

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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International Application No

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